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LORD RIDDELL'S  
WAR DIARY







31/-

# LORD RIDDELL'S WAR DIARY







THE RT. HON. LORD RIDDELL.

[Frontispiece



LORD RIDDELL'S  
WAR DIARY  
1914—1918

LONDON  
IVOR NICHOLSON & WATSON  
LIMITED  
44 ESSEX STREET STRAND

FIRST EDITION . . . May 1933  
Reprinted . . . June 1933

10516

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Hasell, Watson & Viney, Ltd., London and Aylesbury.*

## P R E F A C E

For the most part this book consists of extracts from a diary I kept for sixteen years, beginning in 1908 and ending in 1924. The extracts are restricted to the war period—July 1914 to November 1918. I am publishing them for two reasons : first, because they give an intimate picture of many of the leading actors in that great tragedy, and therefore may perhaps be regarded as of historical interest, and second, because they explain the conditions under which the Press worked during the war. If the narrative appears jerky, it is due to the fact that it has been necessary to excise passages which cannot be published for some years to come. In a subsequent volume I hope to deal with the section of the diary relating to the Peace Conference and the Washington Disarmament Conference. As I wish to make no profit out of the book, the proceeds will be given to the Newspaper Press Fund.

R.

*March 1933.*



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# Chapter I

## THE EVE OF WAR

*A letter to the Press—The Prince of Wales's Relief Fund—Cabinet divisions—The Churches and intervention—Mr. MacDonald's prophecy—Releasing the Suffragettes.*

So far as I was concerned, the war started on the afternoon of Monday, July 27th, 1914, at a hurriedly convened meeting of the Admiralty, War Office, and Press Committee. This body was set up in 1912 as an official channel of communication between the Admiralty and War Office on the one hand and the Press on the other. It owed its existence to the initiative and foresight of those great public servants, Sir Maurice Hankey, Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence, and Sir Reginald Brade,<sup>1</sup> Secretary of the War Office.

The meeting was attended by the Chairman, Sir Graham Greene, Secretary of the Admiralty, Sir Reginald Brade, Colonel Macdonogh, Mr. Robbins, of the Press Association, and myself representing the London newspapers. Owing to the short notice, the other members could not come. Those who were there presented marked contrasts: Graham Greene, carelessly dressed, thin, wrinkled, and immobile; Brade, smart and debonair; Macdonogh, soldierly and imperturbable; Robbins, like an alert bird, eager for information.

Graham Greene was an able, courteous official, with a sense of humour, but eloquence was not his strong point. In a few halting words he announced that the Continental situation was very serious, that it might be necessary to move ships and troops, and that the naval and military authorities were anxious to know what could be done to secure secrecy regarding these movements.

I said I was confident that the Press would publish nothing detrimental if asked to be silent. This was confirmed

<sup>1</sup> d. January 1933.

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by Mr. Robbins. After a brief conversation, he and I drafted a letter to editors on a stray sheet of paper I found on the table at which the Committee were seated. That evening the letter, marked "Secret and Confidential," was issued by Mr. Robbins on behalf of the Committee. It was the first of a long series of similar communications. As it is a document of historic importance, I quote it in full :

*27th July, 1914.*

### THE CRISIS IN THE NEAR EAST

At a meeting of the Admiralty, War Office, and Press Committee held this afternoon, it was resolved that as, in view of the present situation, the authorities may have to take exceptional measures, the Press should be asked to refrain from publishing any information relative to movements of British warships, troops, and aircraft, or to war material, fortifications, and naval and military defences, without first communicating with the Admiralty or War Office respectively in accordance with the arrangement which was notified to you by me in January of last year.

Having regard to the nature of the case, it is found impossible further to indicate the character of the information the publication of which is undesirable in the national interests. The request does not affect the dissemination of news concerning ordinary routine movements or training on the part of the Navy or the Army; its object is to prevent the appearance of anything concerning steps of an exceptional kind which may be rendered necessary by the existing state of affairs.

I may add that the authorities from time to time will continue to issue such information as may be made public. ]

The newspapers are entitled to point their critics to the fact that in not a single instance was the request disregarded. The Germans admit that on August 20th they knew neither when nor where our troops were landed, nor their strength.

The situation developed with alarming speed. On Friday, July 31st, Mr. Lloyd George<sup>1</sup> told me that he was "fighting hard for peace." He added: "All the bankers and commercial people are begging us not to intervene. The Governor of the Bank of England<sup>2</sup> said to me with tears in his eyes, 'Keep us out of it. We shall all be ruined if we are dragged in!'"

On Saturday, August 1st, Wedgwood Benn, one of the

<sup>1</sup> Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1908-15.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Cunliffe, Governor of the Bank of England, 1913-18; d. 1919.

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Junior Whips, came to see me regarding a fund which the Prince of Wales proposed to raise to alleviate distress. He wanted suggestions. I proposed that with the object of allaying public anxiety and raising relief funds the Local Government Board should ask the Mayor of each town to form an emergency committee representing all shades of opinion. I also suggested that Mr. Arthur Pearson and Mr. Hedley Le Bas should be appointed as joint appeal secretaries of the Central Fund. These suggestions were adopted.

On the following day, Sunday, August 2nd, Benn and I had an interview with an official of the Local Government Board, who attached great importance to following the course adopted on previous occasions. What these were did not transpire—I suppose the Crimean and South African Wars. Ultimately we arranged for the formation of a Central Appeal Committee and for a circular to be issued to the Mayors. I sat in the Whips' Room at Downing Street most of the day. A curious tense feeling prevailed, and the adjoining building, where the Cabinet was sitting, was surrounded by silent, anxious crowds.

The Cabinet rose at 1.30 and adjourned till 6.30, when it had another long meeting. I was told there were serious dissensions and likely to be several resignations. It seemed that there were four parties in the Cabinet:

(1) The party headed by Asquith and Grey,<sup>1</sup> who thought it vital to support France; (2) the "Peace Party," headed by Sir John Simon,<sup>2</sup> who would not have war at any price; (3) a party headed by Lloyd George in favour of intervention in certain circumstances; and (4) a party headed by Mackinnon Wood<sup>3</sup> and Masterman<sup>4</sup> which was endeavouring to compose the differences between the other three parties with a view to avoiding a split in the Government.

Lloyd George, Simon, Masterman, and Ramsay Mac-

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Grey (now Viscount Grey). Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1905-16.

<sup>2</sup> Attorney-General, 1913-15.

<sup>3</sup> Secretary for Scotland, 1912-16; d. 1927.

<sup>4</sup> The Rt. Hon. C. F. G. Masterman, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1912-14; Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster, 1914-15; Director of Wellington House (Propaganda Department), 1914-18; d. 1927.

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Donald<sup>1</sup> came to dinner at my house. L. G. said he had been at work for eighteen hours, but he seemed wonderfully fresh. I gathered that John Burns<sup>2</sup> had practically resigned, and that Simon, Beauchamp,<sup>3</sup> Morley,<sup>4</sup> and Mackinnon Wood were considering the advisability of doing so.

While we were at dinner, Simon took a paper out of his pocket and, handing it to Lloyd George, said, "Those are my views." Lloyd George read it carefully and handed it back to him without comment. Simon showed it to me before he left. It was a draft letter of resignation.

A long discussion took place regarding the rights and wrongs of the situation. Lloyd George brought out the official war map and, putting it on the edge of the dinner table, graphically described the position of the various forces. He said that as a compromise the Government had determined to tell Germany that England would remain neutral if Germany undertook not to attack the coast of France or to enter the English Channel with a view to attacking French shipping. He said that if the Germans gave this undertaking in an unqualified manner and observed the neutrality of Belgium, he would not agree to war but would rather resign. He spoke very strongly, however, regarding the observance of Belgian neutrality. I understood Ramsay MacDonald to agree that if Belgian neutrality were infringed, this country would be justified in declaring war upon Germany. He said that he and the Labour Party would resolutely oppose intervention on any other grounds. L. G. strongly insisted on the danger of aggrandising Russia and on the future problems that would arise if Russia and France were successful. I suggested that it would be well to let the future take care of itself, and that we had got to think about the present. How should we feel if we saw France overrun and annihilated? In reply, Lloyd George said, "How would you feel if you saw Germany overrun and

<sup>1</sup> Leader of the Labour Party, 1911-14.

<sup>2</sup> The Rt. Hon. John Burns, President, Local Government Board, 1905-14; President, Board of Trade, 1914.

<sup>3</sup> The Rt. Hon. Earl Beauchamp, First Commissioner of Works, 1910-14.

<sup>4</sup> The Rt. Hon. Lord Morley, Lord President of the Council, 1910-14; d. 1923.

annihilated by Russia?" I said, "Well, the Germans would have brought it on themselves by their action. The war is due to them. Austria would not have acted as she did if she had not had the support of Germany." L. G. said, "Yes, but in 1916 Russia will have a larger Army than Germany, France, and Austria put together. The French have been lending the Russians millions of money for the purpose of constructing strategical railways to carry their armies to the German frontier. These will be completed in 1916. The French papers have been boasting that in that year France and Russia will be able to smash Germany. No doubt the Germans think they must strike before their enemies are ready to annihilate them. No doubt they have been stimulated by extravagant and erroneous reports regarding the state of affairs in Ireland. In fact the Foreign Office are quite convinced of this."

Simon, who looked very gloomy, said, "We have always been wrong when we have intervened. Look at the Crimea. The Triple Entente was a terrible mistake. Why should we support a country like Russia?" I said, "Whether the Entente was a mistake or not, we must act up to our word, both expressed and implied. Furthermore, in a matter of this sort we must brush aside contingencies and problematical situations. We must deal with proximate causes and present dangers. The proximate cause is German aggression and the present danger is the annihilation of France by Germany." Masterman agreed with me, and we both strongly advocated immediate intervention, to which L. G. responded by calling us "Jingoes." They left at 11.30 o'clock. It was an exciting day.

Lloyd George was in a difficult position. He was bombarded with telegrams from friends like Scott<sup>1</sup> of the *Manchester Guardian*, who had wired saying that any Liberal who supported the war would never be allowed by Liberals to enter another Liberal Cabinet.

I was told that the Prime Minister was seeing Burns on the following day to endeavour to get him to withdraw his resignation, but that it was doubtful whether he would succeed. Masterman told me that at a very critical moment in the

<sup>1</sup> Charles Prestwich Scott, Editor *Manchester Guardian*, 1872-1929; d. 1932.



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Cabinet he wrote on a piece of paper, "For Heaven's sake let us all stand together," and threw it over to Lloyd George. He said that the Prime Minister had acted with great dexterity and good temper, and that Grey had made it absolutely plain that unless France was supported, he would resign. On one occasion he remarked with great emotion, "We have led France to rely upon us, and unless we support her in her agony, I cannot continue at the Foreign Office."

When Lloyd George came in to dinner at night he made some reference as to what was going to be done on the morrow. He said, "We intend" . . . and then added, "that is, if we are governing the country to-morrow, which is very doubtful." I said that if Grey resigned, the country would be horror-stricken. Everyone trusted him.

After dinner, Ramsay MacDonald wished to telephone. Just as I was about to ring up the number he required, the telephone bell rang. It was Sir John French,<sup>1</sup> with whom I was on intimate terms. He said, "Can you tell me, old chap, whether we are going to be in this war? If so, are we going to put an army on the Continent, and, if we are, who is going to command it?" I put my hand over the transmitter and told Ramsay MacDonald who it was and what he had said. R. MacD. smiled and suggested that I should go to the dining-room and ask what answer I should give. I did so, and as a result told French that I thought we should be in the war, that we should send an army to the Continent, and that he would be in command. I added, "Lloyd George says: 'Be at Downing Street to-morrow at ten o'clock sharp.'" He thanked me and said, "I shall be there." R. MacD. smiled and said, "They are all wrong. In three months there will be bread riots and we [the Labour Party] shall come in."

On the Monday, August 3rd, I went to Hampstead to see Robertson Nicoll,<sup>2</sup> editor of the *British Weekly*, a great friend of mine. We had a long talk on the situation. When I saw him on the previous Wednesday, he was about to get the Free Churches to prepare a Memorial to the Government against intervention and against supporting Russia. I now explained

<sup>1</sup> Chief of Imperial General Staff, 1911-14; d. 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Sir William Robertson Nicoll; d. 1923.

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the situation to him fully. Before I left he told me that he thought we had no alternative but to support France, and that we must all stand together and sink differences of opinion. I wrote a note to Masterman saying what Nicoll had told me and suggested he should show it to L. G., which he did. I think L. G. attached considerable importance to Nicoll's decision.

In the morning I telephoned to Lord Reading, the Lord Chief Justice, who was at Reading, asking him to come to London, as I thought it probable that L. G. would like to talk things over with him.

During the day came the news that the Germans had infringed the neutrality of Belgium. That made matters fairly plain. In the evening L. G., the L.C.J., and Masterman came to dinner. L. G. said he had been at work since five in the morning making arrangements regarding the moratorium and currency. Nevertheless, he seemed remarkably well and in high spirits.

The Lord Chief Justice seemed very gloomy. He said, "When I came here to-day I did not appreciate the position. I seem to have come into another world."

L. G. said that the action of Germany regarding Belgium had made his decision quite clear, and that he could now support Grey without any hesitation. Burns and Morley had both resigned. Simon was on the fence.

I congratulated L. G. and told him that if he had resigned he would have inflicted a terrible blow on the country, as it was absolutely necessary we should all stand together.

Lena Ashwell (Lady Simson) came to ask me to request McKenna<sup>1</sup> to release nine Suffragettes who had been imprisoned for violence. She said that if this were done, the whole of the Suffragettes would devote their energies to working for the country and drop their propaganda for the time being. Later I went to see McKenna, who said he would release the prisoners if they would undertake not to commit any outrage during the war. I urged him to release them unconditionally. While I was in the room, Mrs. D. A. Thomas<sup>2</sup> was

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna, Home Secretary, 1911-15.

<sup>2</sup> Later Viscountess Rhondda.

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announced. She was shown in, and McKenna and I had a long talk with her, which resulted in an intimation that if the prisoners would give an undertaking in general terms, they might be released. Mrs. Thomas said she would put this forward in the right quarter. McKenna then called in certain officials, who raised various technical objections to the prisoners being released. I strongly urged him to release them without any qualification and trust to their honour.

## Chapter II

### THE FIRST FOURTEEN DAYS

*Kitchener appoints a Press Censor—Lloyd George on "the most dramatic moment in my life"—Germany's three great diplomatic mistakes—General Seely and his son.*

ON August 6th I dined at the "Other Club"—a dinner club established some years earlier by Winston Churchill and F. E. Smith (later Lord Birkenhead). It was a remarkable gathering. Kitchener was in the chair and Winston sat opposite to him. There was a very full attendance. I sat between F. E. Smith and Bonar Law. If I remember rightly, Lord Stamfordham, the King's Secretary, Lord Charles Beresford, Mr. Lloyd George, and other prominent members of the club were present.

Kitchener told me he was going to appoint a Press Censor and, pointing to F. E., said, "There he is. Come and see me in the morning and I will tell you all about it." F. E. asked me what I thought of his job. I said there was only one person who could fill it. He said, "Who is that?" I think he thought I referred to him. I said, "The Almighty, and even He would be criticised."

Winston rose and said he proposed to disregard the rules of the club, which forbade any toast but that of the King, by proposing "Success to the British Arms." The toast was drunk in silence.

I drove home with Waldorf Astor,<sup>1</sup> Seely,<sup>2</sup> and Lutyens,<sup>3</sup> the architect. We went to Seely's house, where we stayed talking till 1.30 a.m. He gave us a great deal of interesting information about the German Army. When Lutyens and Astor left, Seely walked along with me to my house and stayed talk-

<sup>1</sup> Later Lord Astor; d. 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Major-Gen. the Rt. Hon. J. E. B. Seely, Secretary for War, 1912-14.

<sup>3</sup> Now Sir Edwin Lutyens.

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ing for about an hour. He told me he was going out on French's staff and that the Prime Minister had offered him one of the two vacant seats in the Cabinet, which he had declined, as he felt it to be his duty to go to the Front. His interview with the Prime Minister took place in the P.M.'s car when he was driving to the House of Commons.

On the morning of Friday, August 7th, I called to see L. G. and congratulated him on his speeches in the House, and on the way in which he had managed the affairs of his Department during the week. He said that before he made his big speech the previous night he was very angry because his brief had not come from the Treasury, but that he did much better without it. He said he was going to meet the Italian Ambassador at dinner and that he hoped he might get Italy in on our side.<sup>1</sup>

Later I called at the War Office. F. E., Brade, and I went to Kitchener's room, where we found him with the door open, surrounded by Generals and maps—everyone coming and going in a state of great excitement. I asked Kitchener what the duties of the Press Censor were to be. His reply was, "He will see that nothing dangerous goes into the newspapers. Go away with Brade and settle the matter. We must make the English people understand that we are at war and that war is not pap. At the present moment they do not understand the situation. They ought to act as if we were at war." We went to Brade's room to discuss matters. The great difficulty was to find premises adjacent to the Admiralty and War Office. Ultimately we arranged to install F. E. with a scratch staff in a disused, rat-infested building in Whitehall.

On the following day I had another chat with Wedgwood Benn, who gave an interesting description of the first appeal meeting in connection with the Prince of Wales's Fund. It took place at York House. The King and Queen entered the room with Arthur Pearson between them. He being blind, the King held one of his arms and the Queen the other. On the table was a huge pile of cheques—the result of the first day's appeal. Benn said to the King, "In future there will be no need for a tax-gatherer. Your Majesty will be able to dispense with

<sup>1</sup> Italy did not, in fact, join the Allies until May 23rd, 1915.

the Chancellor of the Exchequer. To provide public funds it will only be necessary to make an appeal such as the Prince made yesterday. In two days we have got £400,000, which is more than a good many taxes produce in a year." The King laughed and said, "More than some taxes I have heard of have produced."

Later in the day I heard that McKenna had released the Suffragettes. Lena Ashwell wrote thanking me for what I had done. I also received a letter from McKenna, not in reference to the Suffragettes, but thanking me for helping him in connection with fixing food prices. McKenna said: "Thanks to the rapidity with which you brought the people together we have been able this morning to come to an arrangement."

On Sunday, August 9th, I played golf at Walton Heath. L. G., who did not play on Sundays, walked round with me. He said he was still hopeful that Italy would join us. The Italian Ambassador had told him that the Germans had made three great diplomatic mistakes. First, they had gone to war with the only two nations in Europe who had never given in—viz. England and Russia. Secondly, they had attacked a small nation—Belgium—thus raising feelings of strong resentment on the part of the peace section of the British public. I forget what the third was. L. G. said that the change of opinion during the week had been amazing. On Saturday, August 1st, just before going out to dinner, he had received a letter from Robertson Nicoll saying that he and the Free Churches would strongly oppose any war. L. G. did not put on his dress clothes again until Friday, August 7th. When he put his hand into his pocket he found Nicoll's letter. He told his secretary to attach the letter to Nicoll's article in the *British Weekly* of Wednesday, the 5th, in which he strongly supported the war. L. G. said, "I told my secretary to keep the letter and the article with my most treasured papers, as I shall like to look at them in the future."

He gave a dramatic description of the evening when war was declared against Germany. He said, "We knew about seven o'clock that Germany did not intend to give way in regard to Belgium. We knew this from a telegram which had

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been sent and which had been tapped, but we had no official intimation. They had until midnight in Germany or eleven o'clock in England. Asquith, Grey, McKenna, and I sat there waiting, and then Big Ben began to strike—one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven. As eleven struck we felt it was the stroke of doom. I think it was the most dramatic moment in my life. The terrible sense of responsibility; the necessity for taking a step the consequences of which it was impossible to foretell; a step which might wreck the world and might wreck civilisation. We pulled a lever which might land us on a star or land us in chaos." A prophetic utterance !

About this time the Irish question cropped up again. Redmond<sup>1</sup> insisted on the Home Rule Bill being passed. Carson<sup>2</sup> was equally insistent that it should not be passed. Redmond was willing to give an undertaking that there should be an amending Bill, but said he must have the Bill put on the Statute Book. The Government were very much perturbed.

On Monday, August 10th, I attended the first committee meeting of the National Relief Fund (the official title of the Prince of Wales's Fund). Benn was in the chair. The relief part of the organisation proved to be in a horrible mess. The late Sir Robert Morant<sup>3</sup> had been placed in charge, but evidently this sort of thing was not in his line. I told Benn and Masterman—also a member of the Committee—that fresh arrangements would have to be made. Ultimately Morant retired, and Warren Fisher,<sup>4</sup> one of the ablest Civil Servants, was placed in control, and well he did his work. When properly organised, the Fund fulfilled its purpose and rendered great service as a charitable organisation. One of its most notable achievements was the maintenance of what came to be known as "the unmarried wives." The war disclosed that thousands of the men on active service had been living with women to

<sup>1</sup> John E. Redmond, Chairman, Irish Parliamentary Party; d. 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Edward (now Lord) Carson.

<sup>3</sup> Chairman, Insurance Commission, 1912-19; d. 1920.

<sup>4</sup> Now Sir Warren Fisher, Permanent Secretary of the Treasury; Deputy-Chairman of Inland Revenue, 1914-18.

whom they were not married. Most of these women, many of whom had children, were left destitute. With the assistance of Walter Long,<sup>1</sup> Mary McArthur,<sup>2</sup> and Wedgwood Benn, I prevailed on the Committee to make weekly grants to these women. An enormous amount of distress was thus alleviated.

In the evening I dined with Jack Seely and his son at the Reform Club—a farewell dinner. Seely said we had a hard job before us and that the mortality would be terrible. As we walked back across the Park to my house in Queen Anne's Gate, we stood on the bridge which crosses the ornamental water. In the distance we could see the Foreign Office with the anti-aircraft gun on the roof. Seely said, "I shall often think of this moment as I lie out in the field, looking at the moon and the stars, as one does when one is campaigning." Turning to his son, he said, "You will have to be a father to the family while I am away. If I don't come back, you will have to look after them. I shall rely on you!" The boy replied, "I shall do my best." Fate decreed that the father should go through the war unscathed and that the boy, who later on went to France, should be killed. One of the countless tragedies of the war.

I went back to Seely's house to shake hands with his valet—a very nice man, who had been through the South African War with him and was now accompanying him to France. Luckily he too survived the ordeal.

On Saturday, August 15th, I played golf with McKenna. Naturally he was very proud that he had insisted on his naval programme, and thus provided the nation with ships wherewith to fight the war. He said, "Where would the nation have been had I not insisted on my programme?" He told me, however, that he had had to leave the Admiralty because at the time of the Agadir Crisis he had objected to the proposal to send an expeditionary force to France. As a result, there was a change-over. Winston left the Home Office for the Admiralty and McKenna took his place. He said that we had made three

<sup>1</sup> Later Lord Long, President Local Government Board, 1915-16; d. 1924.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary, Women's Trade Union League and National Federation of Women Workers; d. 1921.



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serious mistakes. We had let the *Goeben*<sup>1</sup> slip through our fingers; we should not have seized the ships we had been building for Turkey; and when the *Amphion*<sup>2</sup> was destroyed by a mine we should at once have mined the German coast—a proceeding which would have met with public approval at that time, but which was impossible after the wave of indignation had passed.

On Tuesday, August 18th, I went to the theatre with L. G. and Masterman to see the amusing old piece, *When Knights were Bold*. We all had a good laugh, which cheered us up in those gloomy days.

L. G. said, laughing, "Winston, as First Lord of the Admiralty, reminds me of a dog sitting on the Dogger Bank with his tail between his legs, looking at the rat who has just poked his nose out of the hole at the other side of the water."

At the theatre we met a pompous individual with whom we had a long conversation. I asked L. G. to tell him a story which was appropriate to some incident mentioned. L. G. did not respond. When the pompous one had left, I inquired the reason for L. G.'s silence, whereupon he remarked, "Never tell a humorous story to a man who has no sense of humour!"

On the following day I dined at L. G.'s at Downing Street. The Lord Chief Justice was there, and Simon, the Attorney-General. I wanted L. G. to make a speech explaining the reasons why we were at war and appealing to the patriotism of the people. He said he did not feel like speaking. Simon still seemed very anti-war, which led L. G. to make a fine little speech on our duty to small nations. He walked up and down the room while he spoke, concluding, "I would rather see the British Empire bite the dust than allow poor little Belgium to be crushed by this hectoring bully!"

L. G. told me next day that Simon, notwithstanding his

<sup>1</sup> The German battle-cruiser which, with the light cruiser *Breslau*, escaped the Allied Fleet in the Mediterranean early in August 1914, and entered the Dardanelles. They were nominally sold to Turkey on August 13th, and took part in several actions in the Black Sea.

<sup>2</sup> *Amphion*, belonging to Commodore Tyrwhitt's Harwich Force, was sunk in Heligoland Bight early in August, after she herself had sunk the minelayer *Königin Luise*, which had violated the Hague Convention by laying mines without warning in international waters.

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anti-war observations, had suggested after Reading and I had left that perhaps he would resign and go to the Front.

[Here I propose to depart from the strict order of events for a chapter or two in order to explain the relations between the Press and the military and naval authorities, and how I myself came to be involved in them.]

## Chapter III

### THE PRESS AND THE FORCES

*Censorship difficulties—"F. E." resigns—Horses for war correspondents, but no permits—A warning against optimism—Telling the public the facts.*

THE Press soon became furious regarding the censorship arrangements. The Cable Censor's Department was chiefly responsible. It had been created secretly and was officered by half-pay officers, many being of the antiquated type afterwards christened "dug-outs."

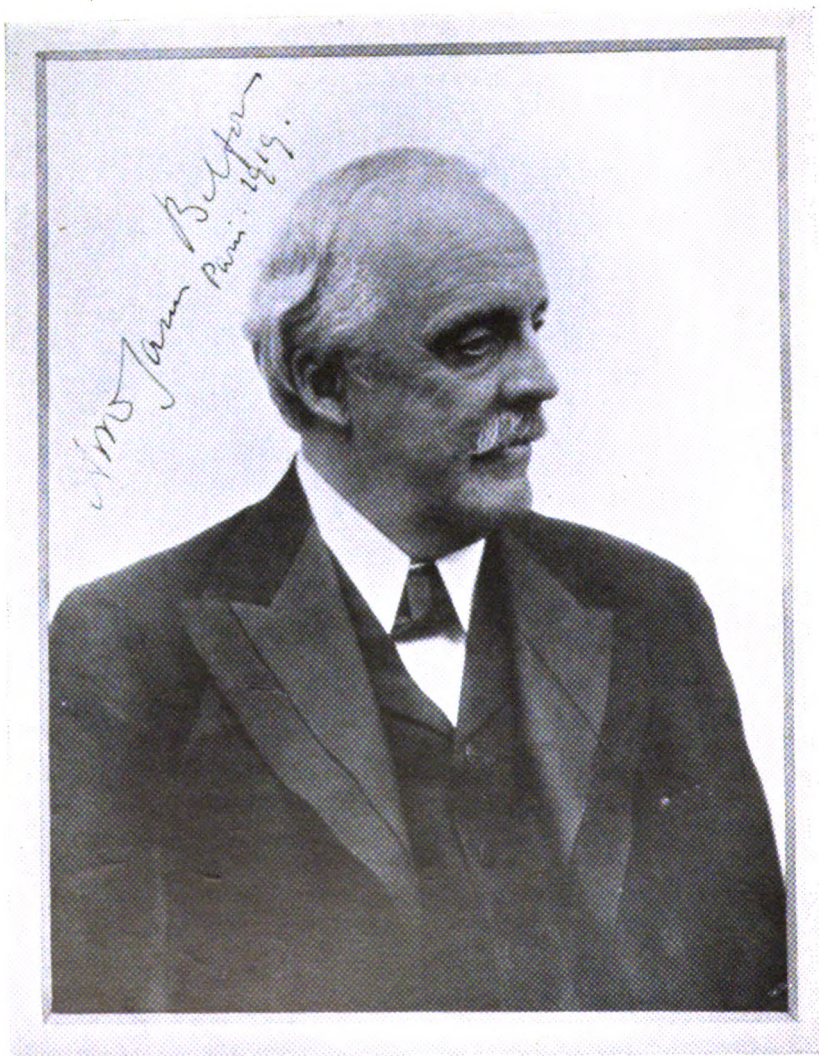
There was, and is, considerable misunderstanding regarding the Press censorship. The Regulations prohibited the Press from publishing certain things—for instance, the movements of troops, ships, or aircraft, or plans for the conduct of the war. The newspapers were under no obligation to submit their "copy" to the Censor's Department, although that plan was generally adopted in the case of doubtful material. F. E.'s position was made all the more difficult by the fact that the Press Bureau—as his Department was called—was only a shield and recording angel for the naval and military censors, who acted under direct instructions from the Admiralty and War Office. F. E. soon resigned his position. He was succeeded by Sir Stanley (now Lord) Buckmaster, who found the task a prickly one. He resigned in 1915 and was followed by Sir Frank Swettenham<sup>1</sup> and Sir Edward Cook,<sup>2</sup> who continued in office until the termination of the war.

The original intention was that war correspondents should go to the Front. When war broke out, the correspondents selected by the papers were called together and acquainted with the arrangements. Each was to be provided with a horse. After the horses had been champing in their stables for six

<sup>1</sup> Now King-of-Arms, Order of St. Michael and St. George.

<sup>2</sup> d. 1919.





THE RT. HON. THE EARL OF BALFOUR, K.G.

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weeks, it became apparent that the correspondents were not to be allowed to go to the Front. Thereupon the War Office notified their willingness to buy the horses which had been purchased, it being stated that the experience gained in the last few weeks had convinced the Army Council that owing to the long distances that had to be covered horses would be useless for war correspondents, if and when they were permitted to take the field. Meanwhile unauthorised correspondents had made their way to France and had been arrested by the French or sent back to England. The authorities adopted the alternative of appointing Major E. D. Swinton<sup>1</sup> as official "Eye-Witness." He went to France on September 14th and continued his functions until the middle of July 1915.

Grave dissatisfaction existed not only among newspaper men, but also among the public and in some sections of the Army, regarding the inadequate information published concerning the progress of the war and the doings of the British troops in particular. I continually urged the War Office to allow correspondents to go to the Front. Eventually, during March and April, three parties of correspondents were permitted to make short tours in France.

In the early part of March 1915 the following notice was issued by the Press Bureau, warning the Press that they were too optimistic :

The magnitude of the British task in this great war runs serious risks of being overlooked by reason of exaggerated accounts of successes printed daily in the Press and especially by exhibiting posters framed to catch the eye and magnify comparatively unimportant actions into great victories. Reported reverses to the enemy are proclaimed as crushing defeats, Germany is represented as within measurable distance of starvation, bankruptcy, and revolution, and, only yesterday, a poster was issued in London declaring that half the Hungarian Army had been annihilated.

All sense of just proportion is thus lost, and with these daily, and often hourly, statements of great Allied gains and immense enemy losses, the public can have no true appreciation of the facts or of the gigantic task and heavy sacrifices before them.

<sup>1</sup> Now Major-General Sir Ernest Swinton, Chichele Professor of Military History, Oxford University.

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The Director appeals to all those who are responsible for the Press to use their influence to bring about a better knowledge of the real situation, and rather to emphasise the efforts that will be necessary before the country can afford to regard the end for which we are striving as anything like assured. The posters, more especially those of the evening papers, are very often preposterous as well as misleading, and, at such a time, those responsible may fairly be asked to exercise a reasonable restraint and help the nation to a just appreciation of the task it has undertaken and the necessity for unremitting effort to secure the only end that can be accepted.

I gather from General Callwell's book<sup>1</sup> that this notice was issued at his instance. While admitting that the policy of secrecy was a serious blunder and very nearly lost us the war, he had no hesitation in asserting that one of the principal obstacles in the way of transforming the United Kingdom into a great military nation when the enemy was at the gate was the excessive optimism of the Press.

During the war a weekly Press Conference took place at the offices of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. The Association represents the London daily, evening, and Sunday newspapers. The Conferences were, however, attended not only by members of the Association, but by delegates representing the whole of the Provincial, Scottish, and Irish Press. Harry Lawson (now Lord Burnham), then Chairman of the N.P.A., presided, or in his absence I did so as Deputy-Chairman. But my special task was to act as an intermediary between the Newspaper Conference and the Press Bureau, Admiralty, War Office, Foreign Office, and other Government Departments. Lawson made an admirable Chairman, owing to his genial personality, wide knowledge, and experience of affairs. He was a delightful person to work with, and we all regarded him with feelings of affection. In other capacities he rendered great public services during the war.

The Admiralty, War Office, and Press Committee also held frequent meetings at which matters of vital importance were discussed and settled.

<sup>1</sup> *The Experiences of a Dug-Out*, by Major-General Sir Charles Callwell, Director of Military Operations, War Office, 1914-15.

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The newspapers did not take the Press Bureau complaint lying down. On March 26th, at the request of the N.P.A., I wrote the following letter :

*To the Director of the Press Bureau.*

DEAR SIR,

My Council have had under consideration your Memorandum of March 12th, 1915, Serial No. D.183, for which, in their opinion, there is no adequate justification. The Press has dealt faithfully with the news furnished by the naval and military authorities, but it may well be that the public misunderstand the situation and that this misconception is producing serious results. If, however, the people are being unduly soothed and elated, the responsibility lies with the Government and not with the Press. In this connection my Council desire to direct your attention to the optimistic statements of the Prime Minister, Sir John French, " Eye-Witness," and other persons possessing official information. The Press acts upon the news supplied. If this is inaccurate or incomplete, the Government cannot blame the newspapers. My Council desire to represent that the methods now being adopted are fraught with grave public danger. Ministers are continually referring to the importance of energy and self-sacrifice on the part of the industrial population, who cannot be expected to display these qualities unless, generally speaking, they are acquainted with the facts. In dealing with the news, the naval and military authorities should consider not only our enemies and the army in the field, but the commercial and industrial classes at home, upon whom so much depends. It is futile to endeavour to disregard the long-established habits and customs of the people.

As you know, I am writing on behalf of the London Press only, but my Council are confident that their views are shared by the provincial papers. I am directed to send a copy of this letter to the Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, Lord Kitchener, and the other members of the Cabinet.

Yours faithfully,  
GEORGE A. RIDDELL.

The result was that Mr. Asquith invited the Association to a conference, which was held in Downing Street. Mr. Balfour, Lord Kitchener, Mr. Churchill, and other Ministers were present. A free exchange of views took place. Mr. A. asked the Press to appoint a representative who would interview Kitchener at the War Office, and Churchill at the



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Admiralty each week, with the object of putting questions to them and receiving private information for circulation to editors. I was detailed for the duty and for some months had frequent interviews with Lord Kitchener.]

His war career was, in a way, a tragedy. When the war started, the Cabinet treated him as if he were a deity. They knew nothing about war and regarded him as a perfect encyclopædia. His powers of expression were limited, and he did not shine in Cabinets or Committees, but at the outset his look and a few terse words were sufficient to inspire confidence and quell contradiction. In April 1915 he told me on more than one occasion that the Cabinet did not understand the difficulties of making rifles, shells, etc. He said, "They were astonished when I told them that a rifle contained so many [I forget how many] pieces." As time went on, the Cabinet ceased to regard him with awe, and later became critical. One could see that he was gradually getting more and more harassed and unhappy. On one occasion he complained bitterly to me of the manner in which he was misunderstood. Like a caged lion he walked round and round the huge table in his room. I said, "I would not worry. When the war is over you will be able to go to Broome and devote yourself to your beloved old furniture, etc." He stopped his walk, and striking his fist on the table, said: "When the war is over I shall shake the dust of this country off my feet and go to the East! The people here do not understand me and I do not understand them!"

Brade told me that Kitchener did not look into details. For instance, one day he insisted on inserting an advertisement telling soldiers' wives that if they had any complaint they were to make it at the War Office, where a bureau had been established for the purpose. No arrangements were made to meet the flood of inquiries. The advertisement appeared on a Sunday. On the Monday 10,000 wives visited the War Office, and on the Tuesday 70,000 letters of complaint were received! The result was to increase instead of to allay dissatisfaction, as the callers could not be interviewed and the letters were not answered. I thought Kitchener a very great man. Most of his prophecies turned out true.

I strongly urged him to allow a limited number of

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correspondents to go to the Front. The following is a note of a conversation I had with him on April 16th:

### WAR CORRESPONDENTS

I stated the views of the Council of the N.P.A. to Lord Kitchener in some detail. He dealt with the matter at length. He explained that the rules for the conduct of the war have been made by the General in Command of the French Forces. One of these rules is that no correspondents shall be allowed to accompany the troops. So long as this rule obtains it must be observed by the British military authorities. I asked Lord Kitchener whether correspondents would be permitted to accompany the British Army if the English newspapers were able to prevail upon the French Commander to alter his decision. His answer was that if the rule were changed the change would apply to the British as well as to the French Army. I further asked him whether he would place any obstacle in the way of the alterations. He answered in the negative, and added, "The French Commander is responsible for the campaign which is being carried on in his country, and the major part of which depends upon the French troops." I asked whether there would be any objection to the Press endeavouring to prevail upon General Joffre to alter his regulations. He replied :

"Not the slightest, but the application must not be made as if I were a party to it. General Joffre has made the rule, and I act loyally with him in this as in all other matters. He considers the rule necessary for the safety of France, and even if we disagreed with any of his regulations, we should be acting wrongly if we did not loyally abide by his decision."

Feeling in the newspaper world grew steadily stronger concerning the necessity for more news of what was happening in France and Belgium. On April 20th I discussed the matter with Lord Northcliffe, who at my request expressed his views in the following letter :

*April 20th, 1915.*

MY DEAR SIR GEORGE,

Apropos our conversation to-day. The vexed question of war correspondents is not a difficult one. The chief difficulty is that of getting writers and artists of distinction to do the work. So far as the English armies in France and Flanders are concerned, they want correspondents, and, by the way, they want more newspapers and other reading matter.

General French has come to the same opinion as the Germans, that war correspondents are necessary to armies, first, as the German War

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Book tells us, in order that the troops may read about the war in which they are engaged, and secondly, so that the public may know about their relations and friends and the war itself.

I had the pleasure of a couple of days at General French's Headquarters, and discussed the subject with him and many Staff officers. If really good men can be obtained, there should be no difficulty in allowing responsible, fully-accredited writers, artists, photographers, and cinematograph operators, under the guidance of some officer and proper censorship, to be with our various armies. What the Germans can do, we ought to be able to do. I do not suggest that they should be the same correspondents all the time, because journalists do not write freshly if they are engaged too long in the same task. The selection might easily be left to you and the Newspaper Proprietors' Association.

There should certainly also be at Headquarters a permanent correspondent of Reuter's Agency, able to send out contradictions of the German lies at least as quickly as Dr. Hamann issues his matter from Berlin. The Foreign Office is obviously anxious to counteract the effect of these mendacious reports in neutral countries. As to the French Army, I am informed that at Headquarters they have no objection to such a permanent correspondent being with the English Army. They have already recently adopted means to circulate news of the French Army rapidly throughout the whole world. The attitude taken at the French Headquarters was that, as far as the English Army is concerned, it is not their affair. General Joffre said, "The English have done so much more than we could have expected that I have no right either to criticise or to suggest anything." . . .

I realise, as I said to you to-day, that a newspaper man with an army is just as much of a nuisance as a soldier would be in a newspaper office. On the other hand, if the Government wish to avoid strikes and to enlist in this war the services of the whole of the people, they should strain every nerve to get really distinguished writers to make the war what it is—a matter of life and death to the nation.

Yours sincerely,  
NORTHCLIFFE.

Sir George A. Riddell.

These views were shared by Lord Burnham and other leading journalists. On April 23rd I had another interview with Lord Kitchener, of which the following is a note:

I had a further discussion with Lord Kitchener, who said that an official intimation from French Headquarters would be necessary before he could depart from the arrangement entered into with the

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French military authorities, but suggested that immediate arrangements should be made for a visit to France of a limited number of British newspaper correspondents. He added that the correspondents will be allowed to remain in France only for a limited period, but intimated that subsequent trips of the same sort would be arranged at frequent intervals.

*Following on this six accredited Press correspondents took up their residence at G.H.Q. in France during the first week in May. Notwithstanding the limitation referred to in my conversation with Lord Kitchener, they remained until the termination of hostilities. Lord Kitchener never recalled them; and although he never officially recognised their position, it was assumed for practical purposes that they were fixtures.*

It is curious that in the greatest of all wars the position of the war correspondents representing the British Empire was never properly defined. Perhaps Kitchener forgot them. More likely he chose this method as a convenient subterfuge that would enable him to appease the Press and at the same time placate the French should questions arise.

Subsequently, in November 1915, I made arrangements with Lord Kitchener that correspondents should accompany the Army in the Balkans.

The arrangements in France were, however, somewhat nebulous, as may be judged from the fact that early in November the following regulations were issued in regard to correspondents:

1. Current events must not be mentioned in detail until the events have been made public in the Commander-in-Chief's dispatches.
2. Only general mention of the fighting can be made. Nothing outside the official communiqués is to be touched upon.
3. Matters of controversial or political interest must be excluded.
4. Praise or censure is to be left to the Commander-in-Chief.
5. Mention of any formation by name is prohibited, including such items as the New Army, the Territorials, etc., also names of units or individuals.
6. The articles of war correspondents must be confined to topographical descriptions and generalities.
7. Detailed information obtained by war correspondents can be used only when permission is given, and the time of publication will vary according to circumstances.

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The War Office denied all knowledge of the new regulations, which were withdrawn.

The correspondents' dispatches did much to stimulate the nation and enable it to realise the nature of the struggle in which it was engaged. The authorities, however, were resolute in declining to allow the correspondents to describe the doings of the different regiments by name. There could be no doubt of the advisability of giving this information from the public point of view, but the military authorities alleged that it would be imprudent to disclose the position of the various units. The Australian and Canadian Publicity Departments, however, adopted the plan of describing the doings of their troops, with the result that the doings of the Home Army were perhaps inadequately appreciated in comparison.\* It is not for me to say whether the authorities were right in the view they took. The Press urged that the enemy already knew in most instances what units were fighting on the various fronts, but this was denied by the Intelligence Department.

In May 1915 I arranged with Lord Kitchener that a summary of the casualties should be issued at frequent intervals for the private information of editors. I issued the first list on May 19th, 1915, when the number killed and missing amounted to 83,342 and the wounded to 121,698. These lists were issued throughout the war, and the secrecy imposed upon the Press was in no case violated.

As the war developed, the publicity settled down to some extent, although the Press had frequent cause of complaint and were not backward in expressing their views. Many foolish mistakes were made by the censors, but perhaps these were inevitable. Looking back, it is somewhat surprising that the system worked as well as it did, considering that the work was done by people without any previous experience and without any principles to guide them. A series of disjointed prohibitions was evolved, but, as far as I am aware, no general principles were laid down. On the one hand the Press were always fighting for more freedom, while on the other mysterious and unknown personages acting through the medium of the Press Bureau and the censors at G.H.Q. were always insisting on the necessity for secrecy. No concordat was ever reached between

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the authorities and the Press. One thing is certain: everyone did his best and what he thought was right. Sir Frank Swettenham and Sir Edward Cook worked like galley-slaves, and no two men were subject to more vituperation. There is no doubt that the war killed Cook—a gentle, kindly, sensitive creature—although I believe it is only fair to say that he suffered more from his encounters with the military authorities than he did from the criticism he received at the hands of the Press. Swettenham was made of tougher fibre—a genial, witty cynic, with the gift of mordant sayings—and still survives to tell the tale. Even if the system were wrong, Sir Frank and Sir Edward did their utmost to make it a success.<sup>1</sup> It was unfortunate that a spirit of hostility developed between the Press and the Press Bureau. Under the circumstances, perhaps, it was inevitable. "Constant criticism tends to harden the hearts of the criticised, and to compel them always to be on the defensive."

Kitchener treated me with the greatest courtesy and consideration. General Macdonogh<sup>1</sup> and General Cockerill<sup>2</sup> were kindness personified and always reasonable. Brade was one of the pivots of the war. The nation can never be sufficiently grateful for what he did in his quiet, unostentatious way. To the Press he was always a good friend. He saw what was possible and gave his opinion without fear or favour.

<sup>1</sup> Now Lieut.-General Sir George Macdonogh; Director of Military Intelligence, 1916-18.

<sup>2</sup> Now Brig.-General Sir George Cockerill; Director of Special Intelligence, War Office, 1915-19.

## Chapter IV

### THE NAVAL CENSORSHIP

*Early misunderstandings—The submarine menace—Views of Mr. Churchill and Sir Edward Carson.*

THE naval censorship was more or less a law unto itself. It issued its communications through the Press Bureau, but, unlike the War Office Censorship Department, was in direct touch with the Press. The head of the Department was a breezy Rear-Admiral, Sir Douglas Brownrigg, Bart., with whom I had many differences of opinion regarding publicity concerning the doings of the Navy and the services it was rendering to the nation. Later on Sir Douglas and I became firm friends, and I am glad to take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the genial and efficient manner in which he gradually adopted the suggestions of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. His task was novel and difficult. Sir Douglas enshrined his experiences in a book, published in 1920, called *Indiscretions of the Naval Censor*. As our relations were not always of the best, perhaps I may be forgiven for reproducing his generous references to myself:

Whilst I think I may honestly claim that our relations with nearly all individual papers were on the whole friendly, I should be overstepping the bounds of strict accuracy if I said the same of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association. This body, as represented by their chairman, developed—or shall I say voiced?—the urgent desire clamantly expressed for more publicity and yet more, and whatever may have passed between Sir George Riddell and myself, it is but fair to add that the degree of publicity which was won for the Press as a whole was *entirely* due to his consistent advocacy of the need for *home* propaganda through the medium of the Press.

Sir George thought, as no doubt he was informed by some persons who desired my removal, that I stood in the way of letting the public know what the Navy was doing. Such was not the case, as my friends in the Navy knew. However that may be, Sir George and I had some

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stormy interviews, and also somelively conversations on the 'phone. . . . We all certainly owe Sir George Riddell a great deal, and I am glad here to confess it. Looking back on the period of the war, anyone can understand how difficult it was to bring into some sort of agreement the naval authorities and those who were responsible for running the newspapers of the country. . . .

On March 11th, 1918, and solely on Sir George Riddell's recommendation and advice, it was decided to appoint an Admiralty Press Officer, and it was Sir George who suggested to us that Lieutenant-Commander Beer, R.N.V.R. (then working under the Controller's Department) would be a suitable man for the work. We had him transferred, and from the moment he came and I took him round to all departments, he was a complete success. . . . He was a whale for work, and he never upset anybody and never let us down, and that is saying a great deal. We owe Sir George Riddell another debt of gratitude for that.

In addition to my meetings with Sir Douglas Brownrigg, I had frequent conferences with various Civil Lords—Mr. Churchill, Mr. Balfour,<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Carson, and Mr. Eric Geddes<sup>2</sup>—and at their request issued numerous private memoranda to the editors throughout the country. Naturally the submarine menace was one of the chief subjects of these communications. On May 12th, 1915, Mr. Churchill wrote :

With regard to the German submarine blockade. It has so far proved an utter failure. Our traffic in and out has been greater in the three months since we have been subjected to it than in the three months before. The normal addition to our merchant ships exceeds the destruction. There has not been the slightest reluctance on the part of our merchant crews to put to sea, and the transport of troops and stores has proceeded uninterruptedly without accident, on a larger scale than at any previous period. Meanwhile our Fleet has enjoyed almost complete immunity. On the other hand, the sinking of the *Lusitania* shows that the Germans are pinning their hopes to this submarine warfare, and that they would rather risk a quarrel with the United States than do anything to hamper the full activities of their submarines. They are no doubt increasing their numbers as rapidly as possible, and look forward to a period when they will produce appreciable results on our oversea trade and supplies. It should not be supposed that the Admiralty is not making every plan that can be contrived and every appliance that money can obtain to cope with this threatened danger, which is certainly a formidable one.

<sup>1</sup> Later the Earl of Balfour; d. March 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir Eric Geddes.



## LORD RIDDELL'S WAR DIARY

Almost two years later I was called upon by Sir Edward Carson to issue a notice in very different terms:

Sir Edward Carson is anxious to emphasise the very serious position created by the German submarine campaign. He fears that the optimism of the British people has led to the supposition that in his public utterances he has overstated the danger. He has been engaged with the First Sea Lord, the Food Controller, and the Shipping Controller, taking stock of our tonnage position as they estimate it will be from month to month throughout this year, and a brief consideration of the facts demonstrates the seriousness of the situation.

Assuming that the enemy destroy from four to five hundred thousand tons of the world's shipping per month, the cumulative effect upon the carrying power of the world is obvious. This would give a total of six million tons, or thereabouts, for the twelve months, and as each ship destroyed would make several voyages during the year it is clear that there is a cumulative loss from month to month much greater than the amount of tonnage destroyed would at first sight indicate. On the other hand, a large number of the ships destroyed are not performing British services.

How far the entry of America into the war may relieve the situation it is of course almost impossible at the moment to say, and, in any event, some time must necessarily elapse before the new conditions become operative.

Every effort which skill and experience can suggest is being made to defeat the German submarine operations, and a fair measure of success has been achieved, but it would be misleading to suppose that any specific remedy is likely to get rid of this menace.

The Government's shipbuilding programme is in active operation, and merchant ships are being built by several other nations. Measures are also being taken to reduce still further the import of commodities which are not absolutely essential. The relief to be obtained by these means, however, must be comparatively small, having regard to the amount of shipping destroyed. If the present rate of losses is maintained, Sir Edward feels a grave anxiety as to how far we shall be able to provide sufficient tonnage to ensure that our people are fed and the Allied armies supplied. Drastic and immediate measures are necessary to satisfy even our minimum requirements for carrying on the war and demands of varying degrees of importance outside these interests will have to be cut down with a ruthless hand.

Sir Edward is anxious that the Press, while abstaining from saying anything calculated unduly to depress the people or to furnish information to the enemy, should take prudent and tactful steps with the object of

## LORD RIDDELL'S WAR DIARY

explaining the position to the public. The nation must understand that it may be called upon to make even greater sacrifices and that the extent of these must depend in a large measure upon an immediate realisation of the position and upon the institution of rigid economies. It will be disastrous if the nation is not warned beforehand that there may be a serious and increasing shortage of food and other commodities. Sir Edward is of opinion that much can be effected by means of moderate and reasoned articles in the Press. It is not a question of personal opinion. The facts speak for themselves. The drastic restrictions on imports will seriously affect many businesses. The public must be convinced that these measures are absolutely necessary in the national interest. The nation fails to realise that, notwithstanding every measure of protection and destruction which it is possible for the Navy to adopt, it is certain that the transport at our disposal must be seriously curtailed in the near future. In order to meet these conditions, the nation must be prepared at no distant date to dispense with all commodities which are not absolutely essential. Sir Edward fears that the public, and in particular business men, do not yet fully realise that the restriction of imports is a vital necessity. The restrictions are frequently regarded as hardships unnecessarily imposed by the Government. Traders do not appreciate the nation's peril and that it is their duty to endeavour to help the Shipping Controller instead of criticising, and, in many cases, endeavouring to circumvent his requirements.

It does not come within Sir Edward's province to indicate the precise economies which should be effected or the means which should be adopted to increase the production of food. These are matters which appertain to other Departments. The purpose of this communication is to endeavour to bring home to the nation the necessity for readjusting its point of view.

The figures as to monthly losses are secret and must not be repeated, although no doubt the totals might be discovered by a careful examination of published lists of losses.

## Chapter V

### BALFOUR, LLOYD GEORGE, AND OTHERS

FROM this point I propose to continue my narrative by direct quotations from my day-to-day diary.

SEPTEMBER 11TH, 1914.—Arthur Balfour and Robertson Nicoll to dinner at 20 Queen Anne's Gate. Very interesting conversation. I asked Balfour whether he would like to live his life over again just as it had been. He said, "No, I am quite sure I should not. I have had a happy life, far more prosperous than I deserved, but I would not care to go over it again. I am tired of it." I also asked him: "Of all the things you have done in your life, what has given you the greatest satisfaction? Your speeches?" He said, "No. My speeches rarely satisfy me. I always feel there is so much that I could have said better. I rarely remember going to bed with the feeling that I had made a successful speech. That may be due to nervous exhaustion consequent upon effort. No. What pleases me most is to write something quietly by myself, to touch it up and to complete it with a feeling that one really has done one's best." Nicoll told him that one of his books had been translated by a great German theologian, who declared himself a follower of Mr. B.'s. Balfour had not heard of the translation and expressed the greatest delight—just like a boy who hears that he has won a prize.

The talk turned on novels. A. B. had not heard of Mrs. Barclay of *The Rosary* fame, or of the renowned Charles Garvice, whose books sell more freely than those of any other novelist. I described the peculiar qualities of the authors, which interested Mr. Balfour very much.

Nicoll gave us an interesting account of modern publishing. He said that during the whole of his thirty years' experience he had not had six good books submitted to him, apart from novels. He had had to suggest books to suitable authors. Nowadays all publishing was run on those lines.

I said it was curious to note the difference in style between the great speakers in the House of Commons—Balfour, Asquith, L. G., Redmond, and Churchill. A. B. agreed, but deprecated his own claim to be included. He said he had no verbal memory, and was therefore unable to prepare as he should do, particularly as he was not able to read his speeches. He expressed surprise that Asquith should be so prone to read. A. B. said there was no occasion for this, as Asquith always expressed himself perfectly. He always used the right word. He never used the word which is worth ten words, but he frequently used the word which is worth one and a half. A. B. did not think that Redmond equalled Asquith or L. G., but thought this might be due to the necessity for always introducing King Charles's head (Home Rule) into his speeches. "It is difficult," he said, "to be interesting and effective when you are chained to one subject." A. B. spoke highly of L. G., and said that he was interesting because he had so many styles of oratory—violent, wheedling, and humorous—and in all he was equally good. He and Asquith made a remarkable combination. Each had what the other lacked. Asquith possessed great judgment, great dexterity and a wide, capacious mind; L. G., vehement fire, power of action, and tact. He said that Winston Churchill had remarkable powers of rhetoric. A. B. then said, "But you have forgotten Grey. He is a most effective speaker. He wins by force of character. His speech at the beginning of the war was a most remarkable effort—probably the most historic speech which has been made for a hundred years. It was a speech which will alter the map of Europe. His studied moderation is one of his great assets. In the speech referred to, he put the case so moderately that he carried the whole country with him. Our unanimity is very largely due to Grey's speech. It was a wonderful achievement. He is a curious combination of the old-fashioned Whig and the Socialist, and it is interesting to observe how the two strains are always appearing. He is a great figure and a great man. It was wonderful how in his war speech he drew you on to the irresistible conclusion that war was inevitable for us."

We then talked of German writers. Both Balfour and Nicoll agreed that Carlyle had done much to foster the

military spirit in Germany by his *Frederick the Great*. Nicoll said that Carlyle's picture with a set of his books had been placed in Frederick the Great's bedroom, this being the only addition which had been made to the contents.

18TH.—L. G. is to make his big speech to-morrow. We had tea together and a long talk. He said he was miserable and inert. His brain would not work. We discussed various suggestions, and then he left to consider them during a walk on Walton Heath. He afterwards told me that he had walked until it was dark.

19TH.—L. G. lunched with me at Queen Anne's Gate. The meeting was at 3 in the afternoon. He was terribly nervous, feeling, he said, as if he were about to be executed. It was a curious sight to see him lying on the sofa, yawning and stretching himself in a state of high nervous excitement. He spoke well and did not give any sign of perturbation, except that his eyes looked like two smouldering furnaces.

Dined in the evening with Alec Murray.<sup>1</sup> An interesting party—Crewe,<sup>2</sup> Winston, Garvin,<sup>3</sup> Neil Primrose,<sup>4</sup> Rothermere,<sup>5</sup> F. E. Smith, and the Duke of Marlborough. Much interesting talk about the war.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Murray of Elibank; d. 1920.

<sup>2</sup> The Marquess of Crewe.

<sup>3</sup> J. L. Garvin, Editor of the *Observer*.

<sup>4</sup> Younger son of the late Earl of Rosebery; d. 1917.

<sup>5</sup> Viscount Rothermere.



To my Beland Baron from W.R. Nicoll  
Taken on Melville morning Aug 30 1920

SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON NICOLL.



## Chapter VI

*Widows' pensions—The shortage of guns—Recruiting in Wales—  
Fisher returns to the Admiralty.*

OCTOBER 2ND, 1914.—Received letter to-day from Alexander Kennedy,<sup>1</sup> regarding output of American munition factories which the Germans are trying to purchase. Showed this to L. G., who said he must read it to the Cabinet, where he had already raised the question, which he said was of grave importance. He says that the arrangements at the War Office are very bad.

3RD.—Motored with L. G. and family and Masterman to Aldershot. We had lunch on the Downs and tea at a small inn. Long talk regarding pensions for widows of soldiers and sailors. Both L. G. and Masterman prophesied that after the war the richer classes will strike at the heavy taxation which it will render necessary. They said this had always been the case. I said that I thought all classes would welcome a liberal allowance for the disabled and widows with children.

6TH.—Went with L. G. and Donald<sup>2</sup> to see *Potash and Perlmutter*. L. G. was completely absorbed by the play. I may here interpose that his gift of detachment is remarkable. He is like a lawyer fighting a big case. He does his best, but now and again takes time off which he uses to the utmost advantage. The result is that he keeps a reservoir of freshness and brightness which enables him to cheer and stimulate everyone with whom he comes in contact. His strong sense of humour and gift of making spontaneous witticisms are also a great help. (Later on members of the Cabinet told me that often when they assembled at Downing Street in the morning they felt dark and gloomy, particularly when our shipping was suffering most heavily from submarine attacks, but that after a time his colleagues became infected by his good spirits, and went off with an appetite for the day's work.)

<sup>1</sup> Later Sir Alexander Kennedy; d. 1928.

<sup>2</sup> Later Sir Robert Donald; d. 1933.



10TH.—Spent the day with L. G. The L.C. Justice, Mr. and Mrs. McKenna, Masterman, and Donald came to tea. L. G. and McKenna very critical about the Antwerp Expedition.

L. G.: I wonder whether Fisher<sup>1</sup> ought not to return to the Admiralty Board?

McK.: I don't think that would work.

McKenna remarked that Kitchener had a strain of cynicism. The talk then turned on Sir Edward Grey.

L. G.: Grey is worn out with the strain.

McK.: Yes, physically worn out.

L. G.: He is apprehensive of everything—just tired out by what he has undergone.

11TH.—Had tea with L. G. at Walton—afterwards returned to dinner. Mrs. L. G. said, "You must just take pot-luck. These hasty invitations are sometimes awkward. The other day my husband asked a Jewish friend to stay to lunch. I was horrified. I knew that we were going to have roast pork and that there was nothing else in the house. Luckily he did not accept the invitation."

L. G. told me that last week he and Asquith sat next to each other at a dinner. Asquith remarked, "You and I are the only ones who have stood this crisis really well. All the others are showing signs of wear and tear." L. G. said the Prime Minister is a very strong man. He possesses the rare combination of a tough-fibred, strong body with a fine, delicate mind.

The talk turned on Masterman. L. G. said that M. had an acute mind and a political sense, but lacked business aptitude and is not popular.

R.: The most dangerous troops in warfare are those on your flank and in your rear. As a politician moves forward he inevitably breaks with different people with whom he has been associating or his relations with them become less familiar. Unless he is very discreet and tactful, they will become virulent enemies and continually attack him. Masterman has not been clever in this respect. That is one reason why he is unpopular.

L. G.: That is very true. You never said a more true thing. Those rear and flank enemies are the very devil!

<sup>1</sup> Lord Fisher, First Sea Lord, 1904-10; 1914-15; d. 1920.

I said that Masterman rendered great service in August, when, at Asquith's instigation, he did much to promote unity. Asquith and Grey had achieved a wonderful feat, unexampled in modern British history. They had brought practically a united nation into the war. When history came to be written this would be regarded as Asquith's great achievement, and it must not be forgotten that Masterman had given him a hand.

The talk then turned to Robespierre. L. G. is reading one of Belloc's books on the French Revolution, which I sent him yesterday. He said, "It throws a new light on Robespierre." I said this was developed in his *Life of Robespierre*, which I promised to send L. G.. He said, "We will exchange: you shall send me your Belloc and I will send you my George Henry Lewes."

(This he did later. The book contained a piece of leather from the table on which Robespierre lay after he had been shot, the leather being stained with his blood. With a pang, I afterwards parted with the book to President Wilson.)

L. G.: Robespierre was a great man. If you read his speeches you will see that he adumbrated and foretold most of the modern reforms. They are all in his speeches.

R.: It is interesting to read his early political life—to note how he slowly and painfully emerged from the mass of politicians. It must be a difficult task to make headway at the beginning.

L. G.: It is a terrible struggle, the struggle to secure recognition.

R.: You often say that courage is the chief requisite in political life. How about patience?

L. G.: That is the highest form of courage.

13TH.—To the theatre with L. G., the L.C.J., and Montagu<sup>1</sup> to see *Potash and Perlmutter* again.

L. G. says Kitchener is a big man. He does not resent advice or criticism. Von Donop<sup>2</sup> and others who are at the head of the Ordnance know all about guns, but have no wide

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. E. S. Montagu, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1914-16; d. 1924.

<sup>2</sup> Major-General Sir Stanley Von Donop, Master-General of the Ordnance and Military Member of the Army Council, 1913-16.

view of a situation. Already L. G. has got orders for guns largely increased. There has been no difficulty. The gun-making firms readily took the orders. Von Donop and the others seemed surprised that they could have any money they required. L. G. said to them: "What are ten, twenty, or thirty millions when the British Empire is at stake? This is an artillery war. We must have every gun we can lay hands upon. We are sadly deficient in guns now. You have never asked for more money."

25TH.—Dined at Masterman's at Walton Heath. L. G. there also. Talked a lot about the war. L. G. said that Elizabeth Asquith<sup>1</sup> had described Kitchener as "a big poster"—i.e. "a large advertisement."

L. G.: I think she is right. He is a big man, but he does not understand English life; and whatever he may have done in the past, pays no attention to details and does not properly control his staff. He is just a big figurehead.

I said an American journalist described him as "a good train-starter." L. G. thought this an excellent description.

L. G.: The Office is terribly incompetent. I wonder who will succeed Sir Clarke Douglas (Head of the Army Council, who died to-day)?

R.: Why don't they appoint Robertson?<sup>2</sup> He is the cleverest man in the Army, and has done marvels with the Expeditionary Force. No army has ever been so well fed.

L. G.: I agree. He is a fine fellow. Just the man we want. I am going to raise the matter with Kitchener. I feel there is no alternative. The action of the War Office in regard to the Dissenters and the Welsh Army Corps is scandalous. They are simply killing recruiting. I don't know, however, whether to defer what I have to say until Tuesday. K. may be upset by Douglas's death.

28TH.—Robertson Nicoll, L. G., McKenna, and Masterman to dinner. L. G. arrived late. He told me that he had had an argument with Kitchener regarding the recruiting arrangements in connection with the Welsh Army Corps, which are

<sup>1</sup> Now Princess Bibesco.

<sup>2</sup> Field-Marshal Sir William Robertson, Quartermaster-General B.E.F., 1914; d. 1933.

notoriously bad, and also in reference to the treatment of Dissenters who are joining the Army.

We had an interesting talk on oratory and style. Nicoll said there was one word in the peroration of L. G.'s recruiting speech at the Queen's Hall which should not have been there. He asked us what it was. No one could reply. He told us it was the word "snug," which should never be used in prose verse, which the peroration was. The word lacked dignity. L. G. agreed that "snug" was inappropriate, and McK. gave the poor word the happy dispatch by saying that Mrs. McK. had condemned it for similar reasons. She is a very good judge of such matters. Nicoll said that the word "amber" was one of the most beautiful in the language. L. G. was not an admirer of "amber," which found small favour with the company generally. L. G. said that "valour" and "valiant" were beautiful words, but that "radiant" was his special favourite. Nicoll did not like "radiant," which was too hackneyed for his taste. L. G. told me afterwards that Nicoll had not got a musical ear, which is true as regards musical sounds, but I think he knows the value of words from that point of view.

29TH.—Played golf with L. G. and the L.C.J. in the morning. The first week-day's golf for some time. The Chief has written an account of the Treasury transactions in which he has been engaged. It will be an interesting record.

He gave me a laughable imitation of L. G. haranguing the bankers. He depicted L. G. with pointed forefinger, saying, "Now, really you could not treat your customers like that! You would have to show the trading community some consideration!" etc.. L. G. was vastly amused at this. The Lord Chief is a splendid mimic.

31ST.—Prince Louis of Battenberg<sup>1</sup> has resigned. Fisher is to take his place. McKenna says he doubts whether Fisher will stand the strain for more than six months. He is considerably over seventy.

L. G. full of his interview with Kitchener. He greeted me with: "Look here! Kitchener is a big man. Nothing small or petty about him. Yesterday he sent for me. He said, 'I have thought over what you said. There is a good deal of justifica-

<sup>1</sup> Later Marquess of Milford Haven, First Sea Lord, 1912-14; d. 1921.

tion for these complaints. Tell me exactly what you want.' I said, 'That, that, that, and that!' K. wrote an appropriate order against each item. He really acted extraordinarily well. [A favourite phrase with L. G.] Then he said, 'Whom would you like placed in command in North Wales?' I said, 'I really don't know, but I have a very clever Welsh officer with me now. He is outside. Colonel Owen Thomas.'<sup>1</sup> Kitchener said, 'Have him in!' and rang the bell. Thomas came in. K. said, 'I remember you in South Africa. As from to-day you will be Brigadier-General Owen Thomas, but go and put on your uniform. Never let me see you in mufti again during the war!' Very dramatic!" added L. G.

<sup>1</sup> Later Brig.-General Sir Owen Thomas ; d. 1923.

## Chapter VII

*Lord Morley's grievance—L. G. at the City Temple—Strange letters from Fisher—Kitchener and Grey feel the strain.*

NOVEMBER 1ST, 1914.—Masterman and Mrs. M. to dinner. Long talk about L. G.. I can see that M. and L. G. are not so close together as formerly. Masterman says he doubts whether L. G. understands the working-classes in the towns. He knows the agricultural labourer better. He thinks the mechanics want his insurance scheme. Masterman thinks they don't.

5TH.—McKenna, Lord Reading, and Sir William Lever<sup>1</sup> to dinner. Reading referred to a conversation he had overheard between McKenna and Metternich<sup>2</sup> when the latter denied that Germany had more than three shipbuilding yards, whereas McK. said they had twelve and gave the names, which led the German Ambassador to express great surprise, although evidently he knew the facts quite well.

Reading met Morley to-day. R. says that M. is very sore—feels that he has been jockeyed out of the Government. He is particularly angry with Harcourt<sup>3</sup> and Simon. He thinks they sold him.

7TH.—L. G., the McKennas, Masterman, Donald, and Gilbert Parker.<sup>4</sup> Devil of a row at the Cabinet yesterday regarding the Press Bureau. Buckmaster, head of the Bureau, attended and addressed them.

8TH.—Macnamara<sup>5</sup> sent for me. He said that he and Baker<sup>6</sup> had drawn up the new scale of Army Pensions and allowances which he wanted to show me. I gave him my criticism, which he did not agree with and did not like. The scale

<sup>1</sup> Later Lord Leverhulme; d. 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Count Wolff-Metternich, German Ambassador in London, 1904-12.

<sup>3</sup> Later Viscount Harcourt; d. 1922.

<sup>4</sup> Sir Gilbert Parker; d. 1932.

<sup>5</sup> The Rt. Hon. T. J. Macnamara, Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, 1908-20; d. 1931.

<sup>6</sup> The Rt. Hon. H. T. Baker, Member of the Army Council.

is drawn on generous lines, but many of the details are highly objectionable.

10TH.—L. G. and Nicoll to tea. Then on to the meeting at the City Temple. L. G. said he was going to follow the P.M.'s example and try reading his speech. It was so much easier. He said he had been invited to dine with R. J. Campbell<sup>1</sup> after the meeting, and that I was to go with him. Nicoll would not go. L. G. made a good speech, suitable to the occasion. After the meeting went to dinner at the Holborn Viaduct Hotel. Present, R. J. Campbell, Dr. Clifford,<sup>2</sup> Campbell's senior deacon, L. G., and self. I asked Clifford whether he was nervous when he had to make a big speech. He has been speaking for sixty years. "Yes," he said, "still nervous and uneasy, except when preaching. One is never nervous in one's own pulpit." R. J. C. agreed with this. Clifford said Gladstone had told him he was always nervous except when replying to an attack, when he forgot all about himself. Clifford is a fine old boy—seventy-eight years old—very interesting. He said one good thing which should be remembered. Campbell observed that some friend of Clifford's had made a remark which obviously might be construed in an unfriendly way. I said, "I expect you adopted the friendly meaning. That is the difference between a friend and acquaintance. One always places the best construction on doubtful sayings by a friend."

Clifford: Yes, of course, and on those of an enemy. Always give him the benefit of the doubt. It is better for him and certainly more comfortable for you!

14TH.—Donald showed me two strange letters from Lord Fisher—one enclosing a form of cablegram which Fisher wished Donald to send to Harold Begbie, who, while in New York as the *Daily Chronicle* special correspondent, had cabled congratulations to Fisher on his appointment. Fisher's proposed cablegram, evidently intended for publication in the American papers, was a most theatrical affair. It finished up with some such statement as this: "In war you must think in continents and oceans and act with rapid strokes."

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. (now Dr.) R. J. Campbell, Minister of City Temple, 1903-15.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. John Clifford, Minister of Praed Street and Westbourne Park Church, 1858-1915; d. 1923.

16TH.—The *Pall Mall* and *Observer* have been sold for £100,000—purchase to be completed in January. The purchaser (Gardner Sinclair, a Scottish printer) showed me a letter from Benson, the banker, offering him £150,000 for the property.

19TH.—Urgent message from Sir Reginald Brade asking me to call at the War Office. He says that Kitchener is much disturbed by failure of English newspapers to give adequate publicity to doings of the French Army and that they are taking all the credit to the English. K. tells him that there is a very strong feeling in France about this. K. had instructed him to see me and ask my advice. Brade said K. was very keen about the matter and had asked him about it six times during the day. I advised that Major Swinton ("Eye-Witness") or Hilaire Belloc should be instructed to write a two-column *communiqué* describing the respective performances of the two armies and that the writer should be supplied with details of French gallantry, etc. I also suggested that the *communiqué* should be issued through the Press Bureau.

Brade says that K. is showing signs of age. He is not the man he was when the war started. The strain has told on him. He says that K. has a very simple, direct mind. He is not quick at seeing points, but usually picks out the right one and goes straight for his object. He is a man of large ideas. Brade says that K. alone was responsible for the idea of an extra half-million men. (L. G., McKenna, and others ascribe this to Asquith.)

20TH.—The Defence of the Realm Acts are being consolidated. The drastic and unique provisions of this legislation have not attracted the attention they deserve. The legislation has taken place so rapidly that the measures have not been properly discussed. The Press have been singularly ill-informed and lacking in criticism regarding a law which wipes out Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, etc., in a few lines. We have got some alterations made, but trial by court martial still stands. A doubtful innovation.)

Dined with McK. and his wife. A committee has been set up by the Cabinet to investigate the German atrocities. It consists of McKenna and Simon.



McKenna laughingly said that he was too combative. He added, "I know my fault and I always make up my mind not to be drawn. The other side know it too. Someone gets up and attacks. Then I forget all my good resolutions and enter into an argument." We talked of Asquith. I said, "He is the ideal advocate of a great party. That is why he exhibits so little feeling. He is the leading counsel and within limits is quite prepared to endeavour to give effect to what he may regard as the unreasonable vagaries of his client, and also quite willing to allow his juniors considerable latitude in the management of the client's affairs." McK. agreed.

22ND.—Spent the evening with L. G. at Walton. He says Grey is very worn. He has not been in a railway train since July 28th. He is always at work. This week some bad news arrived from Russia. Grey told L. G. that it had prevented him from sleeping a wink. L. G. added, "He feels that if things were to go wrong, he would be responsible for the downfall of the British Empire, but the old P.M. has not turned a hair. He is as strong as a horse!"

This week when K. returned from the Cabinet, he told Brade that he had discovered some new religions. Among them he mentioned the Calvinistic Jews! L. G. is still in the thick of his Budget. Interesting to see him reading Pitt's orations on the Napoleonic Wars.

28TH.—Drove with the L.C.J. to Walton. Horrible day. Called on L. G.. He was in bed. We waited while he dressed. He entered the room with a courtly bow. "The Lord Chief Justice and Sir George Riddell, I believe? I am honoured and delighted to see you," etc.. Full of fun and delighted with the success of his speech yesterday. Considering all the flattery he receives, he is wonderfully modest and says little regarding his own performances. The Chief said the P.M. had told him that he thought the Government's financial arrangements the most remarkable of all its operations and had suggested that the Chief should write a book recording and describing them. Reading has made notes which he says may be useful hereafter. Finance is the only direction in which novel expedients have been tried.

I had a long talk with the Chief concerning his career.

R.: When you were at the height of your practice, did you become very weary?

THE CHIEF: Yes, absolutely worn out. I really got to hate advocacy. I hated to see the new sets of papers arrive. Moulton<sup>1</sup> said to me one day, "You are working too hard; I can see it. You must take more rest. It is far better for your client that you should know less of the details of his case and be mentally and physically fit." No doubt he was right. Then I was obsessed with the idea that I should not conduct cases in which I did not believe—a very awkward feeling for an advocate. The tradition of the English law is—and it is a very good tradition—that everyone, even the very worst scoundrel, is entitled to have his case presented to the Courts under certain rules which are well known. That is one of the best sentiments of the Bar and one that has done much to uphold the administration of justice in England.

The Chief says that the Kaiser has cabled to the King of Italy, "Whatever happens, I shall never forget your treachery"; and that the King has replied, "You may gamble with your throne, but not with your people."

We talked of the Defence of the Realm Act. Both L. G. and the Chief thought this sort of legislation very dangerous and subversive of the best British traditions—an opinion shared by Halsbury, Loreburn, and others. The naval and military authorities are supreme. There is no appeal against them.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Moulton, Lord of Appeal; d. 1921.

## Chapter VIII

*Pacifists and others—France asks for money—The Censorship again—L. G.'s plan for a party truce.*

DECEMBER 1ST, 1914.—Went to Brighton to see Robertson Nicoll. Able to spend only an hour with him, as I had to return to town. He is very broken by the war. He said that he had been at a Free Church meeting on Friday and that some of the dissenting ministers are still peace-at-any-price people. On the other hand, some are very militant. For example, one wanted Nicoll to insert in the *British Weekly* a little story of which the point was that we should pray for the destruction of the Germans. Nicoll was for inserting it. Miss Stoddart (the assistant editor), who was present, thought it should be omitted. I sided with Miss Stoddart on the ground that a religious paper should not accentuate asperities.

5TH.—Long talk with L. G., regarding the French Government. He said they had managed their finances very badly, so badly indeed that they now had no money and could not borrow, as the people had lost confidence. He added, "They have had to come here to borrow." He spoke gloomily of the future in France and said that some people believe that the French cannot carry on the war after June. He said he was assured that the respective positions of the Allies and Germans were impregnable, and added, "I fear the war may end in a draw." I told L. G. that many of the dissenting ministers are pacifists. This had been ascertained by sending copies of L. G.'s City Temple speech to the various chapels for distribution. Some of the dissenting parsons, mostly Baptists, had replied that they could not distribute the copies. He said he felt very tired this week-end. This had been an anxious week. He had been called upon to decide many important financial questions affecting France and Belgium.

6TH.—Dined with L. G. at his house at Walton. He read a

Government cablegram from Colonel Knox, one of our representatives with the Russian Army. Not very satisfactory. He says the Russians are short of ammunition. L. G. thinks Hindenburg the only great general who has emerged as yet. He does not think much of Sir John French as a strategist. No doubt we have been defeated in the North; our turning movement has been unsuccessful. The newspapers have been talking nonsense about the attempt of the Germans to reach Calais. French was mistaken in undertaking such a long stretch of line: his battalions were under strength, with the result that his men were called upon to work longer shifts in the trenches than they should have done. At the end we had to call for French reinforcements.

L. G. says Buckmaster is to give up the Censorship. He has done his job well and is being badly treated. It is impossible to make a success of such a task, particularly under the conditions under which he began his work. He gets all the opprobrium due to the suppression of news by the Admiralty and War Office.

Long talk with L. G. about his family. He says that his old uncle is most bloodthirsty against the Germans. He wants to smite them hip and thigh. That is very strange, for he is a gentle old boy—very sympathetic.

20TH.—Just back from Scotland, where I have been to see a wonderful process for converting peat into briquettes, sulphate of ammonia, etc.. Arthur Balfour has invested a large sum in the undertaking.

Dined with L. G., Mrs. L. G., and Megan<sup>1</sup> at Walton. We talked of the German attack on Scarborough, Hartlepool, and Whitby.<sup>2</sup>

L. G.: Do you remember that I prophesied this weeks ago? At the Committee of Defence I said, "Why should they raid Lincolnshire? What object have they got in bombarding haystacks? If I were a German I should bombard Middlesbrough, Hartlepool, and Sunderland, the great industrial centres where we are making steel, etc." At first Balfour was inclined to agree with me, but ultimately he thought that the

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lloyd George's younger daughter.

<sup>2</sup> On December 16th, when 120 civilians were killed and 400 wounded.

danger from long-distance firing was comparatively small. Kitchener thought there was something in my theory. He wanted the Admiralty to mine the coast. He said, "I have nothing but a six-inch gun at Hartlepool, and that is little use." I don't believe the Admiralty did mine the coast. When the last meeting of the Committee opened, Captain Hankey, the Secretary, commenced the proceedings by saying, "Lloyd George's raid has taken place!"

Some day (L. G. went on) I will show you [G. A. R.] a paper which I dictated in 1910 at the time of the conference.<sup>1</sup> I thought I had lost it, but old Sharp at the Treasury had a copy. Had my proposals been adopted, we should have had an army of 1,500,000 men and 1,500,000 rifles. I proposed the Swiss plan. I also proposed to deal with Education, Insurance, Home Rule, the Land, the Drink Question. Balfour, Bonar Law, Lansdowne, Winston, and F. E. Smith were all in favour of my scheme. So were Asquith, Grey, and Birrell.<sup>2</sup> Balfour at the last moment was afraid of splitting his party. I knew it would all fall through when he told me he was going to consult Akers-Douglas.<sup>3</sup> He said, "You will be surprised to hear whom I am going to consult. Akers-Douglas knows our party; he is very shrewd." Balfour asked me if I would stand out of the Government if he did. I said, Yes, I would. Asquith, however, declined to go on without me. The suggestion was that Balfour and I should stand out to balance each other, but that we should support the Government. I suppose Asquith thought the arrangement would break down. I said to Balfour, "Let us abolish all party controversies for ten years. Let us try to reorganise our national life. Let us endeavour to get something done and done well. After ten years the country will have had enough of us, but we shall

<sup>1</sup> A conference of Liberal and Unionist leaders, arranged after the death of King Edward to try to reach an agreement on the constitutional issue. It consisted of Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George, Lord Crewe, and Mr. Birrell on the Government side, and Mr. Balfour, Lord Lansdowne, Mr. Austen Chamberlain, and Lord Cawdor on the Opposition side. The Conference sat from June 17th to November 10th, 1910, but failed to reach an agreement.

<sup>2</sup> The Rt. Hon. Augustine Birrell, Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1907-16.

<sup>3</sup> Later Viscount Chilston, Home Secretary, 1902-6; d. 1926.

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have accomplished something. As things are now reforms are difficult."

21ST.—Lunched with the McKennas. McK. very sarcastic about the Navy. He cannot understand Fisher. Thinks he and Winston were manœuvring for a spectacular battle on the old-fashioned lines.

## Chapter IX

*Kitchener's working day—Churchill at Antwerp—The Press and D.O.R.A.—The Haldane controversy—Masterman resigns.*

JANUARY 2ND, 1915.—Played golf and lunched with L. G.. He told me he was dissatisfied with the progress of the war in the West and was drawing up a memorandum on the subject, which he would circulate amongst his colleagues. He said, "We really have not much brains at the head of our army in France. General French is a good cavalry leader, but he is not a great strategist or tactician. We are making no progress, and I think the whole situation requires consideration."

Brade and Donald to dinner. I asked Brade who is to command the new armies. He said, "Ah, that is the question! I don't think French will be equal to the task." I inquired whether Kitchener would go. Brade said he did not know, but thought he might like to go. He told us that Kitchener works hard. He arrives at the Office at 9 every morning, lunches there, and leaves about 6. His lunch is sent over from the house where he is living in Carlton House Terrace or Carlton Gardens. Lady Wantage has lent it to him. The said lunch, I gathered, is a cold collation sent to the Office in a table napkin. After lunch he has a cigar. While he is smoking this he is most amenable to any request. He is very approachable and interviews a constant stream of visitors of all sorts. When he reaches home he reads the evening paper, then he has dinner, and after dinner he has a nap and then devotes himself to reading Foreign Office telegrams. Brade often goes in to see him in the evening. Brade again referred to K.'s habit of thinking aloud, which often causes his subordinates to imagine that he has come to a conclusion when he is merely reasoning the matter out privately with himself and ultimately may give altogether different orders.

3RD.—Percy Illingworth<sup>1</sup> died to-day. He was a manly,

<sup>1</sup> Government Chief Whip.

straightforward, honest fellow, who never did anyone a dirty trick. He left no enemies.

4TH.—Called to see Winston at the Admiralty. Found him hard at work at 7.30 p.m. His messenger told me that Winston usually starts his day at the Admiralty at 10 a.m. and finishes at 12 p.m. or 1 a.m. the following morning. He looked very pale and careworn, but said he was "quite well—very well." After dealing with one or two business points in reference to the Press Bureau, he spoke of the loss of the *Formidable*,<sup>1</sup> which he said had been caused by submarines.

We talked about the war in France. I said, "I don't think we have any very great generals there. I mean in the army. We have not done very well. Our men have been very brave, but the commanders have not displayed any great skill. We took on the protection of a longer line than we could hold, and consequently lost an enormous number of men."

Winston: We were bound to do that or the Germans would have got to Calais.

As I walked out of the room he turned wearily to his desk to resume his work. He is one of the most industrious men I have known. He is like a wonderful piece of machinery with a flywheel which occasionally makes unexpected movements.

5TH.—Long talk with Pease<sup>2</sup> and Freddie Guest<sup>3</sup> to-day. The latter here for Illingworth's funeral. Asked me to dine with him. He wanted to know who is going to be Chief Whip after Illingworth. I said I had not heard.

Lady Clonmel says that General French has been here for a few days' holiday. Also that Kitchener is scheming to take control of the new army when it goes to France and that if he does so French will resign.

9TH.—Spent the morning and lunched with L. G., who spoke very nicely of Percy Illingworth. He said he was no doubt killed by overwork and anxiety. Some months ago the

<sup>1</sup> The battleship *Formidable* was torpedoed by U24 off the Start on January 1st, 1915.

<sup>2</sup> The Rt. Hon. J. A. Pease (now Lord Gainford), President of the Board of Education, 1911-15.

<sup>3</sup> Captain the Rt. Hon. F. E. Guest, Treasurer of H.M. Household, 1912-15; A.D.C. to Sir John French, 1914-16.



P.M. and L. G. arranged that the work in the Whips' Office should be divided, the Chief Whip retaining the House of Commons, Honours, etc., and the work in the country being delegated to the Second Whip. Illingworth would not agree. L. G. said that before Illingworth's funeral some of the Ministers came to lunch in L. G.'s room at Downing Street. Percy was usually one of the party, and as they sat at lunch they instinctively looked up, expecting to see him walk in through the window the Whips use as a means of access from their office to the Chancellor's house. L. G. said that curiously the last funeral he attended before Illingworth's was Silvester Horne's.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Clifford delivered the funeral oration (he did the same for Percy Illingworth) and P. I. accompanied L. G., who said he wept during the ceremony, being "a very emotional fellow."

I asked L. G. about the command of the new armies, and whether he had seen French when he was over last week. He said, "No, but I shall see him when he is here next week."

We spoke of Kitchener's habit of thinking aloud. L. G. said that he had noticed it, and then repeated one of K.'s monologues: "They want me to send soldiers there—but I don't mean to. It would be murder. I never mind ordering a soldier to face danger in the ordinary way, but I will not have soldiers murdered." I said, "K. always looks well after the soldier." L. G. agreed.

I pressed L. G. with the necessity for issuing the new scale of pensions and allowances as soon as possible. The truth is that he is so busy with other matters that he cannot "get the Committee together," to use his own phrase, which means that he, as Chairman, cannot make an appointment. He agreed that he should not have been put on the Committee in view of his other work.

14TH.—The McKennas have been staying with the P.M. at Walmer Castle over the week-end. Mrs. McK. told me that the P.M. was in a holiday mood and would not discuss business.

L. G., the L.C.J., Masterman, Spender, Anderson Graham, Editor of *Country Life*, and Stephen Graham, his son, just back

<sup>1</sup> The Rev. C. Silvester Horne, M.P. for Ipswich, 1910-14; d. 1914.

from Russia, dined with me at Queen Anne's Gate. Stephen Graham gave rather a gloomy account of the Russian prospects in the East.

Robertson Nicoll furious at the statement that Aberdeen,<sup>1</sup> the Irish Viceroy, is to resign. Says he has received a letter from Aberdeen stating that he has been forced by Asquith to take this step and that he has been very badly treated. Nicoll threatens to attack the Government on the ground that Aberdeen's removal will break the only existing link which binds the cause of Home Rule to the Irish Presbyterians. He says that Aberdeen is very popular in Scotland and that his resignation will cause much dissatisfaction in that country. He showed me letters from several leading Presbyterians in Ireland and asked me to tell L. G. and if necessary the Prime Minister.

L. G. knows very little about the Aberdeen question. He suggested that I should see Bonham Carter,<sup>2</sup> the P.M.'s secretary, who said that Aberdeen's retirement had been determined upon months ago. Bonham Carter promised to ask Birrell to see Nicoll and explain. I wrote to Nicoll reporting what had taken place, and think he will be deterred from his threatened campaign, which seems to me ill-advised.

14TH.—Eustace Fiennes,<sup>3</sup> M.P., gave me an account of various incidents at Antwerp. He drove Winston from Dunkirk to Antwerp. When they stopped on the road, a Belgian soldier recognised Winston and addressed him by name. Winston said, "How do you know who I am?" The man replied, "I used to work in Parliament Street and often saw you." The journey was somewhat delayed, which made Winston fret and fume. When they reached Antwerp he visited the outskirts of the town and evinced great bravery in the face of the shower of shells which the Germans were pouring in. Later he said, "I am quite clear. This town must

<sup>1</sup> Now Marquess of Aberdeen and Temair. Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, 1905-15.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir Maurice Bonham Carter. Private Secretary to Mr. Asquith, 1910-16.

<sup>3</sup> Now the Hon. Sir Eustace Fiennes, Bart.; served as Intelligence Officer with the Royal Naval Division at Antwerp.

be defended to the last; the infantry must fight street by street if necessary." He did not appreciate the effect of the German artillery.

Golfed with L. G. and the L.C.J.. Later long talk with McKenna on the Army and Home Office circulars regarding soldiers' wives, which I described as imprudent and unnecessary. He defended them, although he says he is not responsible, as they are the work of the War Office.

16TH.—Lunched and played golf with L. G., the L.C.J., and Donald.

Both L. G. and Reading very tired; the strain of the war is beginning to tell. We had a long talk on the French Official Report on the German atrocities, which contains most obscene and dreadful details. L. G. said it should be published verbatim.

17TH.—Played with L. G. in the morning. He went on to lunch with the Governor of the Bank of England. The L.C.J. said that he had found it difficult to write the judgment of the Court regarding the position of alien enemies, as he had been so busily engaged with Treasury work. He had consulted ninety-five authorities. The judgment has been printed and will be delivered on Tuesday.

Dined with L. G. at his house. His birthday. I telephoned wishing him many happy returns. When I arrived, I repeated the salutation, whereupon he said, "You are the first person who has remembered my birthday"—which led to many explanations on the part of his family, much to our amusement. L. G. says there is a movement on foot to take the Jews back to Palestine—some new scheme—and that, much to his surprise, Herbert Samuel<sup>1</sup> is very keen on it.

L. G. again said that he thinks Kitchener a big man and the best for the job. He says K. has shown more foresight than any of the other generals. He foresaw that the Germans would take the road which they did take. The French, on the other hand, were wrong in their surmises. They said the Germans would not go through such unsuitable country, but they did. L. G. said that recently the question of outrages was being discussed with K., who pays no attention to such things. K.

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Herbert Samuel; Postmaster-General, 1910-14, 1915-16; President Local Government Board, 1914-15; Home Secretary, 1916.

said, "What is the good of discussing that incident? *All war is an outrage!*"

L. G. says that French has gone back happy and well satisfied. They all treated him very nicely and his confidence was re-established. He had been very suspicious of Kitchener. L. G. believes this is due in a great measure to Wilson,<sup>1</sup> who is on the French Staff, and (so Freddie Guest told L. G.) informed French that K., when in France, asked the French generals whether they would like a change in the highest command. L. G. says that he does not believe K. said anything of the sort. If he did, he would not have done so in Wilson's presence, as Wilson alleged. He does not believe that K. wants to go to France. He does not think French a great general, and was much impressed by the fact that when here he seemed to have no plan of action. He thinks this is a time when the Prime Minister should endeavour to bring about more homogeneity of action between the Departments, the War Office, the Admiralty, etc.. The P.M. is unrivalled in giving speedy and accurate decisions on matters submitted to him, but he has not got the art of probing into things for himself and cleansing and restoring weak places. L. G. seemed harassed and worried by business and anxious for some relief. He therefore sang songs for about an hour, Miss Olwen<sup>2</sup> accompanying on the piano. L. G.'s favourites are mostly songs of the Victorian era and earlier; these he sings with great vigour.

I saw Masterman in the morning and suggested he should telephone and wish L. G. many happy returns, etc.. He said, "No, I really cannot. I am not speaking Welsh just now. We must wait for the healing hand of time."

Lord Reading told me yesterday that before the Liberal Party came into power he was dining with Haldane at his flat in Whitehall Court. Asquith and Metternich were there. In reply to some observation from the latter, Asquith said in his most snorty and brusque way, "If we come into power, there will be no change in our foreign policy." This seemed to sur-

<sup>1</sup> Later Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson; d. 1922. Assistant Chief of General Staff to Sir John French and Liaison Officer with the French.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Lloyd George's elder daughter. Now Lady Carey-Evans.

prise Metternich. Reading also referred to a visit he and Metternich had paid to Burnham at Hall Barn, when Metternich had spoken of the desirability of a better understanding between Great Britain and Germany. To this Reading replied, "That is easy enough: stop your naval programme." Metternich said, "First of all we must clear up all outstanding political questions."

21ST.—Dined with Donald. Sir Thomas Lipton<sup>1</sup> guest of the evening. He told me that he took the Empress Eugénie to Marseilles and drove round the town with her in a cab. She went to see the exterior of her former palace. L. G. says he thinks what Lipton says is true, but that he talks too freely. Also that when King Edward went to Kiel, the German Emperor sent to inquire "whether he had brought his grocer with him"—to wit, Lipton. King Edward was very angry. The thrust caught him on an unprotected spot.

25TH.—Had an interesting interview to-day with Sir John Simon, the Attorney-General, and Sir Stanley Buckmaster, the Solicitor-General, regarding the proposed amendment of the Defence of the Realm Act. Simon asked whether the Press expected different treatment from other people. I said, "No." He then promised after some discussion to endeavour to amend the Act by placing civilians under the ordinary criminal courts except in time of invasion or other emergency. I said that the military authorities could declare martial law at such times without any statute. He agreed, and said that the Law Officers had so advised, but that the Army people were so used to long codes that they wanted it all in black and white. Buckmaster said it would be better for the Press to remain under the War Office, who would treat them more leniently than the Home Office. I replied that the Home Office did not want the job, and were endeavouring to frighten the Press by saying how much more severe they would be. Simon laughed, and said, "I quite agree with you. The Home Office does not want the job." Subsequently he wrote me a letter, in which he said he would have a difficult task to get the Act amended.

28TH.—Dined with Donald. Brade one of the party. He gave me to understand that the War Office would support an

<sup>1</sup> d. 1931.

amendment of the Defence of the Realm Act on the lines indicated, and said he had seen Simon and told him their views. It therefore seems doubtful whether Kitchener is the stumbling-block. Brade gave an amusing account of the visit of Millerand, the French War Minister, who has been here seeing Kitchener. Brade said he hurried him off in a motor-car. "Everywhere he went he found troops—lots of troops. He has returned profoundly impressed." Brade told me that he had secured Kitchener's assent to my proposal that the disabled should be dealt with by a civil department. This Brade thinks should be the Local Government Board. The matter is to come before the Cabinet to-morrow. Brade feared Kitchener would object to parting with these arrangements. He says K. strongly objects to the interference of other Cabinet Ministers with the Army. Brade therefore expected an outburst of objections from K., but he agreed quite quietly. Brade has therefore written to or seen Samuel.

Brade is still sleeping at his office.

29TH.—Gulland<sup>1</sup> has been appointed Chief Whip. No one seems very pleased. He is not an impressive or attractive person; whether he will prove capable remains to be seen. Wedgwood Benn was offered the second position in the Office with the duty of managing the Party's affairs in the country, but he declined and decided to remain with the Army. Masterman has had to send in his resignation. Macnamara was offered Masterman's position, but declined unless he could remain at the Admiralty. From his own point of view I have no doubt he has done the wrong thing. This is, I think, the third time he has missed his chance. Missing chances is dangerous in the greedy game of politics. L. G. and others describe his conduct as "heroic"!

Our agitation on behalf of the disabled sailors and soldiers has been successful. A Committee is to be appointed. Probably Asquith will take the chair himself.

Called to see L. G. at Downing Street. I said, "Well, how is the bankers' pet?" (The bankers have been larding him with praise at their annual meetings. One said he ought to be made

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. J. W. Gulland, Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasury, 1915-17; d. 1920.

a Dukel) " This is enough to turn anybody's head! " L. G. laughed and said, " It is, but the whole thing is very amusing. Think what they were saying six months ago! And think what they may be saying six months hence! "

Donald told me a curious story about the Haldane controversy.<sup>1</sup> The *Daily Express*, *Globe*, and other papers have been full of bitter attacks on Haldane, who is designated incompetent and pro-German. Donald has published a series of effulgent articles on the other side. On Thursday, Sir George Arthur, one of Kitchener's private secretaries, arrived at the *Daily Chronicle* office. He said that he noticed that the *Daily Chronicle* were about to publish the articles in pamphlet form, and that Lord Kitchener thought it undesirable to continue the controversy. Donald showed me a letter from Haldane thanking him for the articles and asking for fifty copies of the pamphlet, so apparently he does not share in the desire for suppression.

30TH.—Golfed with L. G.. He is going to Paris on Monday to attend a financial conference of the Allies. Montagu is to accompany him. Also Professor Keynes,<sup>2</sup> a professor of political economy whom he has engaged at the Treasury. L. G. says he has established an Intelligence Department, of which Sir George Paish<sup>3</sup> is the head. Until now, when the Chancellor required information as to the doings of other Governments or past events, he had to go outside the Treasury for it. Now the Treasury will have its own Intelligence Department. L. G. said that when he wanted information he used to send to Paish, who edited the *Statist*. L. G. thought, " Why should I do this? Why should I not have the information in the office? " Hence the new department. L. G. says that French finance is in a bad way, but improving. Ribot, the French Chancellor, is old, feeble, and timid, and not only is the Government finance badly handled, but this applies also to the French private

<sup>1</sup> Viscount Haldane (d. 1928), Lord Chancellor, 1912-15. He had been attacked from November 1914 onwards on the ground of his alleged pro-German sympathies, and for having reduced the size of the standing Army and palmed off on the country the Territorial Force. He was superseded by Lord Buckmaster in June 1915.

<sup>2</sup> Fellow and Bursar of King's College, Cambridge.

<sup>3</sup> Joint Editor of the *Statist*, 1900-16.

banks. The Bank of France, however, is run on very conservative lines. Professor Keynes, in his report on French finance, remarked that, compared with the Bank of France, the Bank of England was "skittish"! "When Lord Cunliffe, the Governor of the Bank of England, read this," said L. G., "the old boy looked very distressed!"

In the afternoon L. G. had to go to London to make arrangements for his trip. He came back to Walton at 10 p.m. He makes a point of sleeping there every night; he says he cannot sleep in London. He did not like having to go to town alone and insisted on taking one of the dogs for company—an old pug named Zulu.

More talk about the bankers' chorus of praise. L. G. remarked, "They are quite sincere, but I know how soon they may change their tune."

Called on Masterman in the afternoon. He said he wished to consult me as to the letter he should write to the P.M.. I said it was most important that the letter should be published, and that it should refer to the fact that he had offered to resign some months ago. He agreed, and said he was to see the P.M. on Monday. It appears that Gulland intimated to Masterman that the P.M. wished him to resign. I did my best to minimise L. G.'s annoyance with Masterman and strongly advised him (M.) not to allow the breach to widen. I suggested that he should write to L. G. saying that he (M.) had resigned and would like to see him on his return from France. This M. did.

Later I saw McKenna, who talked of Masterman. McK. said, "It is a sad business."



## Chapter X

*Fisher talks of his career—The poor inventor and his gun—  
L. G.'s Paris impressions—Some Clemenceau stories.*

FEBRUARY 3RD, 1915.—Lunched at the McKennas' to meet Lord Fisher and Sir George Reid.<sup>1</sup> Long and interesting talk with Fisher, who drove me to the Admiralty. He is a wonderful old boy—full of life and energy. At lunch he got up and showed us how he taught a Polish countess dancing in the presence of King Edward. He waltzed round the room in great style. He said many striking things. When we were alone I asked him what was likely to happen in regard to the German submarine attack which has just developed on our North-west Coast. I will repeat his answer as near as possible in his own words:

“Our proper plan is to blockade Germany and the adjoining neutral countries. That is the way to end the war. That is what Nelson would have done. This war requires one man to manage it. There is no one to keep the threads together. There is no proper cohesion between the different departments. Asquith is good at exposition, but he is slow and timid. To end this war it is quite possible that some big man will be needed—a man of action, full of courage and decision. Arthur Balfour is the best man I know. He is not a Pitt, but he has wonderful courage and a wonderful brain. Lloyd George might be the man. We shall see. In war you do not want safe men; safe men are no good. You require men who take risks and pull things off.

“I prophesied years ago that 1914 would see the Armageddon; it was obvious. The Kiel Canal would then be ready. I also prophesied that Jellicoe<sup>2</sup> would command the British Fleet and crack the Germans like that [making a sign with his mouth as if he were cracking a nut]. Look at his mouth. And so

<sup>1</sup> High Commissioner for Australia, 1910-16; d. 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Now Earl Jellicoe; in command of Grand Fleet 1914-16.

he will. But the blockade is necessary. I am writing a book of phrases for midshipmen. Life is all phrases. For example, 'Reiteration is the road to conviction.' If you say a thing often enough and loud enough, people will eventually believe you. Then again, 'Life is strewn with orange peel.' So it is; you may be on your back any minute. I have not yet finished my little book; just now I am too busy to bother with it.

"The interesting part of the life of a prominent man is the early part—the time when he was climbing. When he reaches the top his career is usually public property. I feel this to be so with reference to myself. When I was about nineteen I had been engaged in some heavy fighting in the East. Shortly afterwards the Admiral gave me instructions to proceed up a river and carry out a certain operation. I was to be in command. I was the youngest man on board. I inquired whether he wanted me to achieve his object at all costs. He said, 'Yes.' And I did, but we were smashed to smithereens. Everyone thought I should be court-martialled; they did not know what the Admiral's instructions were. That was the foundation of my career.

"I have been fighting all my life. When I was quite young I had a great fight. I was then a member of an Ordnance Committee. A man named Vavas seur had a new gun. No one would look at it. He was very poor, living in a garret. I saw what a good thing his invention was. I fought his battle, and eventually he became a director of Armstrongs."

R.: Was that the man who left your son his money?

FISHER: Yes, you are quite right. Some years afterwards I got a letter from him when I was at sea. It read, "Sir, Unless you see any objection, I propose to leave you my estate." I replied, "Dear Vavas seur, No objection. Many thanks." That was a curious incident, was it not?

7TH. Lloyd George back from Paris. He telephoned asking me to lunch at Walton. He says that the Conference was most successful, not only from a financial standpoint, but in other respects. He has drawn up a report stating what took place on the general question. He said that he should send copies to the P.M., Grey, Kitchener, and Haldane, but not to all the Cabinet. While I was with him he revised the draft and

then returned to London to meet the Russian Chancellor of the Exchequer. He told me that Millerand, the French War Minister, had not informed his colleagues of certain proposals made by our Government when he was here, that he, L. G., had seen most of the members of the French Cabinet, and after explaining the matter to them had induced them to overrule Millerand. L. G. described Briand as the biggest man in the French Cabinet. He is now the hope of the capitalist classes, although a Socialist. Briand has a beautiful voice, and talked so distinctly that L. G. was able to follow what he said. He told L. G. a good story about Clemenceau. Caillaux, who is quite bald, said to him in a fussy way, "I must go to such-and-such a committee meeting." Clemenceau replied, "Well, go if you must, and take your forty hairs with you!" This pleased L. G. immensely. He says the French are quite resolute and absolutely confident of success. Joffre has no doubt that he can force the Germans back.

L. G. was much impressed with Edward Rothschild, the Paris banker. Our gold reserve being unprotected, but our credit first-class, L. G. wanted the Banks of France and Russia, whose market in gold is not free, to undertake to assist us with gold if necessary. The Bank of Russia agreed, but the Bank of France would not. L. G. saw Rothschild, who is one of the directors. He saw the position and at once made a suggestion which he carried through with the Bank. L. G. says that Lord Rothschild cannot give good advice on the spur of the moment, but that if he has twenty-four hours in which to gather information and consider the subject, his advice is usually excellent. L. G. says that the Paris Rothschild is the ablest member of the family he has met. L. G. spoke highly of Lord Cunliffe, Governor of the Bank of England. He described him as a sagacious old boy. Cunliffe is no good in conference. His manner is unfortunate, but his advice good. When any proposal was made which L. G. thought doubtful, he turned to Cunliffe and asked his opinion. If he replied, "I don't like it," L. G. knew that it could not be accepted and acted accordingly. In the whole of these transactions Cunliffe made only one error, which, like a big man, he has acknowledged. At the outbreak of war he and his colleagues wished to

suspend the payment of gold. L. G. and Asquith consulted and determined that this would be a mistake.

L. G. visited French, who he says is looking well. He also saw Robertson, who he says is the biggest soldier he has met except Kitchener. L. G. put to French a proposal which the Government have been urging upon him. This French resolutely declined to accept. L. G. inquired what Robertson (now Chief of Staff) thought of it. French said, "He is here. Would you like to see him?" L. G. said, "Yes." When Robertson arrived, French put a proposal to him which was not that made by L. G., who said, "Before you answer, let me put the question in my way." Robertson at once answered that he was in favour of it, whereupon French agreed also.

L. G. says that Ribot, the French Minister of Finance, is a charming man—very courteous. M. Delcassé is a funny little man—like a French draper—very fussy in his manner. Poincaré, the President, is a great gentleman, but has lost the confidence of the people. Bach, the Russian Finance Minister, is an able man who speaks English perfectly. L. G. liked him. He told L. G. that the Russians were unprepared for war. Even now they are short of guns and ammunition and cannot get their men to the scene of action.

L. G. said he had been so much impressed with Robertson that he had reported in favour of giving him some high command which he did not indicate. I told him that some years ago Winston had asked me if I knew Robertson, and had said that he would rather meet him than anyone whom he did not know already. I said this had led me to make inquiries concerning him, and I sketched his career. L. G. was much interested.

He said that Cunliffe would not go to the firing line in France. Not because he was timid, but because if he were killed or injured, the public would say, "Serve him right! Why did he not attend to his own business?"

L. G., Grey, and Reading are to dine with the Russian Ambassador on Tuesday. L. G. expressed himself as much gratified by the conduct of his private secretary, Davies, in Paris, who managed the trip with great dexterity and tact. The Chief Interpreter was a Russian banker. L. G. said to

him, "Have you a brother? I seem to know your face!" It then transpired that the banker's sister is Mrs. William O'Brien.<sup>1</sup>

10TH.—Brade sent for me to the War Office. He asked me to read a memorandum describing proposals for sending out war correspondents on a trip round the British lines and for the issue of periodical bulletins as to the result of military operations in France. At the foot of the memorandum was a letter in Kitchener's handwriting:

MY DEAR PRIME MINISTER,

I have made the above arrangements with Sir John French. Are they satisfactory?

Yours very faithfully,  
KITCHENER.

The P.M. had written at the foot, "Excellent.—H. H. A." He had also written the same thing in the left-hand corner of the document and covered his writing with large blots. I said to Brade, "Evidently the P.M. was overcome with emotion. Are those tears of joy?"

11TH.—Lunched with Lord Fisher at the Admiralty. He said that he had yesterday ordered thirty new ships. He had sent for the shipbuilders, who had met at the Admiralty, and had given the orders without restriction as to price. The shipbuilders had promised to get the work done in the time desired provided they were furnished with badges for their men to show that they were engaged on Government work. Lord F. said, "I replied, 'Have as many badges as you want!'" He again urged the necessity for a general blockade. He said that he had christened Admiral Beatty "Beatty beatitude." This pleased the old boy greatly. He also gave a graphic account of his reception of Garibaldi in 1860. When F. heard that he was coming, he taught the men in his ship the Italian National Anthem. Garibaldi wept when the men (1,200) greeted him by singing it.

Fisher says that the North Sea battle is important because it has established the ascendancy of the British sailor in the

<sup>1</sup> Wife of the Irish politician.

minds of the Germans. He added, "Psychological matters of this sort are of special value in naval warfare." He said, "People talk nonsense about fighting like gentlemen. When you are fighting a man, you want to hate him. Hit him in the stomach and on the head. Your business is to lay him out!"

13TH.—Played with L. G. and lunched with him. He told me another good story regarding Clemenceau. Briand said to L. G., "Clemenceau was born with only one day's supply of good feeling, and he has used all that on himself!"

L. G. says he is not happy about the war. The Russians are doing badly. He thinks it will be a long affair.

Mary MacArthur says the Queen gave her a magnificent silver table ornament as a Christmas present.

14TH.—Played with McKenna and Harold Baker, Under-Secretary for War. Mary MacArthur and my wife came down to lunch. We had a long talk concerning the Defence of the Realm Act. Mary MacA. said the House of Lords were getting credit for being more solicitous for the liberty of the subject than the House of Commons. McKenna strongly contested this. He also said that in the present state of public feeling, trial by court martial was likely to be more just than trial by jury.

20TH.—L. G. takes a gloomy view of the military situation. He says that the Russians have had a bad defeat and he fears the war may last a long time. He wishes to see Robertson Nicoll and me together, and I have arranged to ask Nicoll to dine on Thursday.

L. G. told me a good story regarding his first election speech, in which he said, quoting the Scriptures, "Silver and gold have I none." One of the newspapers in commenting upon this had remarked that no doubt the speaker had made this reference with the object of accentuating the fact that he was not deficient in *brass*.

25TH.—Lord Murray, Brade, Robertson Nicoll, and Donald to dinner. L. G. unavoidably prevented. Brade told a good story concerning Asquith. When the first definite news of the Mons disaster reached the War Office, Brade took the telegram to Downing Street, where he found the P.M. seated alone in the Cabinet Room. He gave him the telegram.

Asquith read it with no sign of emotion except that he read it twice. He handed back the telegram, only saying, "I suppose we are doing everything possible?"

Murray says that his firm, who are carrying out defence works for the Government, have sunk the *Montrose*—the ship which carried Crippen. It was filled with cement and sunk at the mouth of one of the harbours.

## Chapter XI

*The new D.O.R.A.—L. G. complains of slackness—Injustice to Haldane—Gladstone as a House of Commons man—A “conspiracy” against Asquith.*

[MARCH 7TH, 1915.—The Defence of the Realm Amendment Act passed its second reading. The Attorney-General accepted my amendments. Amid the clash of this huge war the liberty of the subject seems a small matter, but in reality it is vital. We shall not always be at war, and must try to preserve the precious things which make civilisation worth having.]

L. G. was to have played with me this morning, but was prevented by a long letter from Arthur Balfour, concerning certain questions affecting the war. L. G. played with McKenna, Donald, and me in the afternoon, and I spent Sunday night with him. Balfour's letter was dictated. He excused himself by saying, “It would be painful for me to write and more painful for you to read.” The reply consisted of a detailed explanation on the points referred to. L. G. says that Balfour is a very useful member of the Committee of Defence. He possesses a searching, probing, and penetrating mind—always probing here and investigating there—very different from Asquith, whose mind is entirely judicial. I said, “Give Asquith his brief, and he will give a splendid opinion.”

L. G.: The best opinion I know on stated and agreed facts, but he lacks initiative and takes no steps to control or hold together the public departments, each of which goes its own way without criticism. This is all very well in time of peace, but during a great war the Prime Minister should direct and overlook the whole machine. No one else has the authority. I have raised some questions, but have had to do this in the Cabinet. For example, I raised the question of guns and ammunition—thanks to you. You remember the letter from America you gave me. But I had to fight. I had to get a Committee appointed and go there and question the officials.



All very unpleasant, as it was not my job. Haldane has been terribly upset by the war. I suppose he has felt the attacks upon him. He has been treated disgracefully by the public, who are firmly convinced that he is a German spy, whereas he is one of the most patriotic persons in the country, which owes him a great deal. It is all due to his having described Germany as his "spiritual home" and entertained the Kaiser to dinner. By the way, Ramsay MacDonald was at that dinner. The public have done poor old Haldane a serious injustice. I dined with Winston the other night.

R.: How was Mrs. Winston?

L. G.: Charming and delightful as ever.

R.: She is a queen amongst wives, and manages Winston well.

L. G.: Yes, she does. The conversation turned on second marriages, and she was saying that she should leave written instructions for her successor as to how to manage Winston! We asked her to mention a few. She laughed and replied, "They must be kept private, but I don't mind mentioning the first and most important. Feed him well. You must give him a good dinner; his dinner is a very important item in his daily routine."

L. G. was much amused at this and said, "Mrs. Asquith might leave the same instructions. The old P.M. loves a good dinner. Both he and Winston are very different from you and me, to whom food means very little."

R.: Is Haldane fond of his dinner?

L. G.: Yes, very. He has a good cook and the cigars are excellent. He always has good cigars. His cooking is like himself.

R.: I have been reading two volumes of Joe's<sup>1</sup> speeches, just issued. His style improved in a wonderful way. When he first began to speak, his sentences were often ill-arranged and too long. He speedily altered all that.

L. G.: Gladstone was the man for long sentences, but his voice and presence carried them off. What a man he was! Head and shoulders above anyone else I have ever seen in the House of Commons. I did not like him much. He hated Noncon-

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Chamberlain.

formists and Welsh Nonconformists in particular, and he had no real sympathy with the working-classes. But he was far and away the best Parliamentary speaker I have ever heard. He was not so good in exposition. He was very long and he often bored you, but in debate, when he was attacked, he was superb. He had all the arts—gesture, language, fire, and latterly, curiously enough, he developed a very pretty wit. That was when he was over seventy! I wonder what the explanation was?

R.: He became more mellow perhaps.

L. G.: Yes, men alter. Some become more crabbed and others more mellow.

R.: How did Gladstone and Chamberlain compare as debaters?

L. G.: Gladstone was like a man wielding a huge broadsword and Chamberlain like one wielding a delicate rapier.

R.: Gladstone had a wonderful eye.

L. G.: He had the eye of a demon when he was angry. How he used to fling himself about when he spoke! and it all seemed so natural.

R.: Was Dilke<sup>1</sup> a good speaker?

L. G.: No, he was well-informed, but dull. An unattractive man. He had no power of making friends. That was one cause of his ruin: he had no friends to rally round him. He acted well to Joe. He declined to enter the Cabinet in 1880 unless Joe was included.

We talked of L. G.'s big speech at Bangor delivered last Sunday. He said he dictated it going up in the train. Many of his supporters were annoyed that he should have spoken on a Sunday. The Rev. John Williams, whom L. G. described as the greatest orator in these islands, had told him that it was unfortunate that he could not have spoken in a chapel, as this would have toned down opposition. (The speech was delivered in a theatre.)

R.: Were the six years you spent as a practising solicitor happy years?

L. G.: I liked the advocacy, but hated the office work; and as I never sent in any bills, never had any money until my brother joined me, when things became better.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Dilke, 1843-1911.

10TH.—Dined with Robertson Nicoll, who is furious at what he describes as the Government's betrayal of the Dissenters over the Welsh Church Bill—the operation of which it is proposed to postpone by agreement. Nicoll vows that the Dissenters will not rest under this injustice. He begged me to convey this to L. G..

13TH.—Golfed and lunched with L. G. and the Lord Chief Justice. Drove to Walton with the latter. He told me that he had spent the week-end at Walmer with the P.M.. He says the P.M.'s great responsibilities sit lightly upon him. Except for two hours when he was dealing with the business upon which the Chief had been called to Walmer, he barely mentioned the war.

When we reached L. G.'s house, we found him sitting in an easy chair telephoning. He greeted us by throwing up his eyes and pretending to strike at us with his feet. He said he was tired out. I asked him why he had introduced the new Defence of the Realm Bill, giving the Government power to take possession of factories, workshops, etc., for the purpose of increasing the production of war material. He said, "All the others were afraid. They thought there would be a terrible row in the House of Commons. It was not my job, but I agreed to do it."

I again asked L. G. whether he thought the war was being conducted with sufficient vigour ; whether Asquith was not too easy. He answered, " Things are very unsatisfactory in that respect. Winston said to me the other day, ' We ought to make you a sort of Government Whiteley, charged with the duty of providing each department with all the difficult and odd things it requires.' "

READING: They should make you something more than that. A general supervisor and stimulator is badly needed.

We talked of Welsh Disestablishment. L. G. says that a horrible mess has been made.

17TH.—The Newspaper Proprietors' Association forwarded to the Cabinet a letter drafted by me at the request of the Council by way of a reply to a circular from the Press Bureau complaining that the Press was unduly optimistic.<sup>1</sup> I

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter III.

showed the letter to Brade. I said, "I do not contend that the authorities should issue depressing news, but they are bound to show both sides of the picture which they do exhibit. They are not justified in claiming great victories unless they let the public know at what cost these have been secured. The man-in-the-street does not know the real facts regarding Neuve Chapelle. If he did, his view of the incident would be very different. The people believe that the war is virtually over and that the Germans are beaten. The result is an altogether wrong tone in the country. Everyone is playing for his own hand. The commercial and industrial situation is very serious. The working-classes are seething with discontent and the result will be most serious unless the country is made to realise the real position and the nature of the task before it."

Brade agreed and promised to discuss the subject with Kitchener.

Robertson Nicoll showed me interesting letters received from Cabinet Ministers regarding the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, in which they defended the Suspension Bill and asked for his assistance.

20TH.—Golfed with L. G. and the Lord Chief Justice. The latter gave me an amusing account of a dinner at which he was present a few days ago. Lord Morley and Lord Haldane, who were of the party, engaged in a violent discussion on the war, to which Morley is still antagonistic.

L. G. commented upon Haldane's speech at Conan Doyle's lecture, in which Haldane said that before the war he had arranged an expeditionary force, of which French was to be commander.

Much talk regarding the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. L. G. says the negotiations have been muddled.

21ST.—Spent the afternoon with L. G.. Long talk on the liquor question. He asked me whether I thought the nation was ripe for total prohibition. I replied in the negative. He said that from his experience at a trade conference he was of the same opinion. He said the Labour leaders had intimated there was strong objection to prohibition. They objected to interference. They were willing to vary trade-union rules, but were not willing to agree to prohibition. I said, "In France only

one class of liquor has been prohibited. You will have to go slowly here." L. G. agreed. Yesterday I complimented him on his admirable speech at the Conference and on the results which had been achieved. He said, "Arthur Balfour was very interested. It was his first experience of a Labour conference. He was evidently a little apprehensive; he acted like a man who enters a lion's cage for the first time. He seemed inclined to shelter behind the lion-tamer [that is, behind L. G.]. He was, however, very charming and very helpful."

27TH.—Golfed and lunched with L. G., who spoke a good deal about Arthur Balfour. There is still much criticism of the Prime Minister, the suggestion being that he does not exercise adequate control or display sufficient driving power. L. G. said again to-day that the machine wants more guidance.

29TH.—L. G. telephoned to me in a state of great anger and excitement regarding a leader in the *Chronicle*, referring to a so-called conspiracy to supersede the Prime Minister. The names of his suggested successors were mentioned, including L. G., who described the leader as most injurious and indiscreet.

30TH.—By appointment called to see L. G. at the Treasury. He spoke very strongly about the *Daily Chronicle* article, which he described as indiscreet and foolish. He said that the Prime Minister is much perturbed. "The old boy was in tears," L. G. continued. "I shall not let this rest. I have never intrigued for place or office. I have intrigued to carry through my schemes, but that is a different matter. The Prime Minister has been so good to me that I would never be disloyal to him in the smallest detail. I may criticise him amongst ourselves, as I have no doubt he criticises me, but we are absolutely loyal to each other. I have been very worried by this leader, which is open to the construction that it was inspired by me with a view to giving point to the criticisms in the Tory papers, of which no one is taking any notice." I strongly advised L. G. not to allow the subject to worry him. He looked quite ill. He thanked me for my advice and said he had told the Prime Minister he should consult me.

## Chapter XII

*Asquith meets the Press—Talks on prohibition and State purchase—Impressions of Kitchener—"Newspaper embroidery"—Churchill on Gallipoli—The shell shortage.*

APRIL 1ST, 1915.—A conference with the Press (referred to in Chapter III) took place at 10 Downing Street. Present: The P.M., Kitchener, Winston, McKenna, Buckmaster, Swettenham, Sir E. T. Cook, Bonham Carter, and the editors of all the London papers except *The Times*. Harry Lawson<sup>1</sup> stated the case for the Press and the P.M. made an interesting speech in reply, but said nothing definite. When he had finished I told him that the public were under the impression that the war would be over in two or three months. I asked him whether the Government wished the Press to foster this idea. He said, "Ask Lord Kitchener." Kitchener then said, "The public are much mistaken if they think that." We then had a general discussion, as a result of which the P.M. said that he would always be glad to meet the Press, and the suggestion was made that the newspapers should appoint someone who could keep in close touch on their behalf with Kitchener and Winston. In the course of the P.M.'s speech he disclaimed having been unduly optimistic and drew a distinction between what he described as true and false optimism. He strongly disclaimed any intention on the part of the Government to interfere with criticism.

Notes of a conversation between Sir William Robertson Nicoll and Paderewski:

NICOLL: I know nothing about music, but might I ask you what you have found to be the most popular music with the public?

PADEREWSKI: Chopin's Nocturnes, most certainly. They contain both sugar and spice. Beethoven has a melancholy

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Burnham.

strain which appeals to the public, but they do not understand him. He had another side. He was one of the most disordered and wayward geniuses who have ever lived.

NICOLL: Do you think that ideas can be expressed by music?

PADEREWSKI: No, except elemental ideas. We know and recognise gay and sad music, but, subject to this, music intended to represent an idea might be interpreted by one person in one way and by another in another way. At one time people might interpret a piece of music, intended to represent love, as representing love, and at another time they might interpret it as representing something entirely different. I have, however, sometimes felt when playing that I was able to express in music things I could not say—things beyond the power of saying. When the war started I was busy composing, and for the first time in my life was satisfied with my work. Then the great conflict came crashing into my peace. Since then I have never been able to touch my music.

2ND (GOOD FRIDAY).—Dined with L. G., who had just returned from Lord Rothschild's funeral, which he said was very impressive. He described Lord R. as a nice old boy, but repeated that he had not a quick mind. He was not ready in suggestion. He required time to think, but in due course usually came forward with some sagacious proposal. He gathered opinions from other people, and mostly made a wise selection. When L. G. asked him whether he thought a 5s. income-tax and super-tax would be fair, he thought for a moment and replied, "Yes, quite fair." L. G. said that some day he means to tell this story publicly, as he thought Lord R.'s answer very fine.

Winston had a bad throat. L. G. gave an amusing account of Winston's interview with a throat specialist at which L. G. was present. Winston ended the interview by saying, "I entirely disagree with your diagnosis." Winston and F. E. Smith dined with L. G. the other night. Winston had been told not to talk so as to save his throat. He commenced dinner by talking in low tones, but before long he was speaking at his loudest.

We had much talk to-night on the drink question. L. G.

spoke in favour of compensating the trade. On Sunday he is to confer with Simon and others. I said I thought total prohibition would be very dangerous. He admitted that he did not favour it.

4TH.—Had tea with L. G. at his house at Walton. Took with me Brade and his wife. Found quite a large party: the L.C.J., who had come from Winchester, Sir John Simon, Roberts, the teetotal M.P., and Sir Dods Shaw and his wife. The Chancellor said he had been conferring with the L.C.J., Simon, and Roberts on the drink question. The conference was to be continued after tea. The L.C.J. was to stay the night. I told L. G. that the working-classes would strongly oppose anything in the nature of total prohibition.

5TH.—Played with L. G. in the morning. Met Stevenson of John Walker's,<sup>1</sup> with whom L. G. had a conversation, in the course of which he asked him to arrange a deputation of the distillers.

7TH.—Robertson Nicoll says the Dissenters are still furious regarding the Welsh Church Bill and that he has been bombarded with letters. McKenna saw me the other day and said he would like to meet Nicoll to show him some private documents, no doubt the Opposition pledges as to repeal. I promised to arrange a meeting.

I showed McKenna a letter from Hartshorn, the miners' leader,<sup>2</sup> in which he says that unless the situation is handled carefully there will be a coal strike in the course of a few months.

9TH.—Had a conversation with MacLean, the Deputy-Speaker,<sup>3</sup> who spent the day with me last Wednesday. He wanted advice as to whether he should try to get another job. He said he felt he was out of the fighting line. I advised him to hold on, but to let the P.M. and L. G. know that he would like a change. MacLean said that the Speaker is very good to

<sup>1</sup> Later Lord Stevenson, Director of Area Organisation, Ministry of Munitions, 1915-17; Vice-Chairman Ministry of Munitions Advisory Committee, 1917; d. 1926.

<sup>2</sup> Later the Rt. Hon. Vernon Hartshorn, President South Wales Miners' Federation; d. 1931.

<sup>3</sup> Later the Rt. Hon. Sir Donald MacLean, Deputy-Chairman of Committee House of Commons, 1911-18; d. 1932.



him. MacLean told me that when Asquith offered him the job, he (MacLean) said that it was not quite what he would like, as he would prefer to be in the fighting line. Asquith answered, "In politics it is a good rule never to refuse anything."

10TH.—L. G. says that X. worries too much about small points. If you were buying a large mansion he would come to you and say, "Have you thought that there is no accommodation for the cat?"

L. G.: I thought Rosebery looked very old and ill at the wedding [of Neil Primrose]. When I went into the vestry they all laughed and greeted me with, "Here's the man who wants to stop our liquor!" Queen Alexandra said, "Mr. Lloyd George, I hear you are wanting to turn us all into teetotallers." F. E. Smith dined with Kitchener the other night. K. said, "Well, here is seltzer, and there is lemonade. Which will you have?" F. E., who likes his champagne, replied, "Many thanks! I take them mixed!"

R.: This drink agitation is saturated with humbug and hypocrisy. The working-man is to be reformed and regulated, but many of the reformers are laying in good stocks of liquor to provide against the evil day of prohibition.

L. G.: I have come to think so, too. It is the old story.

R.: I have been pressing the Prime Minister to make a speech. The country requires enlightenment and waking up.

L. G.: Quite true. The P.M. wants me to undertake the management of the manufacture of the munitions of war. It is a big job.

11TH.—Dined with L. G. and family.

L. G. much concerned at an accident to his dog, Zulu, who was knocked down by a motor-car and resuscitated by a dose of brandy, which greatly exhilarated him, much to the Chancellor's amusement.

L. G. says that Kitchener has agreed to his taking on the supervision of the manufacture of munitions.

12TH AND 15TH.—Two long interviews with Kitchener, who was very pleasant. He is a curious man, difficult to describe. Elizabeth Asquith's witty description of him as "a big poster"—that is, a big advertisement for the Government

shop window, but not the goods—has some truth in it, but it does not do K. justice. He has clear conceptions of what he requires and good judgment. His weakness is due to the fact that he does not understand the peculiarities of the English people. He is more or less a foreigner. He says himself that he does not understand the conditions that prevail here. He has made the mistake of trying to do everything himself, or through the War Office. He knew what was wanted and should have called in business men to make the arrangements. He gave me a long explanation of the difficulties with which he had had to contend, and remarked that he was surmounting each hedge as he came to it. For example, he told me he had just discovered that there were no houses for the additional workers required in Newcastle and that he had had to send an architect there to make the necessary arrangements. I did not like to say, "Why was this not discovered two months ago?" From a business point of view, his organisation and conceptions of how his objects are to be accomplished are most primitive. He knows what he wants, but he has just been fumbling along without any proper plans for procuring it. I referred to the Committee of Imperial Defence. He replied contemptuously, "I doubt if they know what a fuse is!"

Kitchener has the Oriental method of talking. He is not direct; he talks round a subject, but eventually makes his point clear. He spoke fully and freely on the subject of Press correspondents and put his position quite well. He said,<sup>1</sup> "I must be loyal to Joffre. He won't have correspondents. He is in command; if he changes his rules, I will follow suit. But I will not put the blame on him. I act in conjunction with him." I said, "Is he a nice man?" "Nice enough," replied Kitchener. But he did not seem enthusiastic, or perhaps did not wish to pursue the subject. I complained to K. of the suppression of news, and said that every line of French's dispatch regarding Neuve Chapelle spelt excuse or failure if you knew the facts. Kitchener said, "*I have not had time to read his dispatch*, but I think you are putting it too high. It was a victory, but not what it might have been." Kitchener is a little vain, which is not surprising. I complimented him on his youthful figure, and

<sup>1</sup> This conversation is referred to also in Chapter III.

said that if I did not know how he hated men who wore corsets, I should believe he did. This pleased him immensely. He talked of war correspondents and their effect on soldiers, which he said was bad. He said, "An officer will make friends with a correspondent who will write him up, with the result that demands for promotion come from home when the man frequently has done nothing deserving promotion. This is prejudicial to the morale of officers, who come to think that the way to promotion is through the Press rather than through hard, conscientious work and devotion to duty." K. added, "Mind, I don't dislike correspondents. I have always recognised their good points, and often stole paragraphs from their dispatches to use in my own. That G. W. Steevens<sup>1</sup> who died was a genius. I often made use of his stuff. He had real insight into military affairs." My impression is that Kitchener is a good head if well served by his subordinates.

16TH.—Brade sent for me hurriedly to-day. He said he wanted my advice concerning a dispatch which had been submitted to the Censor by the London News Agency. It was written by a journalist in the employ of the *Daily Mail*, Mr. Valentine Williams, who was taken by Northcliffe to France, where they stayed with Sir John French. The dispatch contained a description of Neuve Chapelle. It had been revised and altered in pencil by French himself, and the News Agency stated that he had authorised publication. Brade had telegraphed to inquire if this was true, to which French had replied in the affirmative, but that he had made the condition that the matter should appear in all newspapers. Brade said that this created a very awkward position in view of Kitchener's arrangements with Joffre, and that he, Brade, proposed to commandeer the article and issue it through the Press Bureau. I strongly advised him to submit the matter to the P.M. and Kitchener, and suggested that the article should be released through the London News Agency, subject to the condition that all papers should have the option to take it, and that some definite understanding should be arrived at with French.

<sup>1</sup> Author of *With Kitchener to Khartoum* and *From Cape Town to Ladysmith*, who died of enteric fever during the siege of Ladysmith, January 1900.

Later Brade sent for me again, when he said that the P.M. and Kitchener were much perturbed and perplexed. They did not like to stop publication, but thought French had acted indiscreetly. The P.M. said that Brade could not "burgle" the article, as he proposed, but agreed to my suggestion, which was to be adopted, and a telegram sent to French pointing out that his action seemed inconsistent with the arrangement with Joffre. Brade showed me the draft cable. I suggested some changes, which were made.

17TH.—Golfed with L. G. It appears that on Wednesday he asked the editors of the *Daily News*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Liverpool Post*, and *Westminster Gazette* to dinner to discuss the drink question, when he proposed to them a scheme for the purchase of the trade interests by the nation—a deal amounting to some £300,000,000. With the exception of Donald of the *Chronicle*, the editors appear to have acquiesced. It is a rash scheme, and I told L. G. so. He said, "Mr. Gladstone tried to deal with the drink question without buying out the trade. Surely we cannot expect to accomplish what he failed to do!" I (Riddell) cannot believe that the Cabinet will sanction such a proposal. Why should the State engage in such an enterprise? The prospect is most alarming.

We had a long talk on oratory. L. G. said that the audience did not appreciate the importance of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech. It was only appreciated when it appeared in print. I pointed out that Lincoln's opening words, "What we say here will not be remembered. What they did here will never be forgotten," had proved incorrect. His speech had long outlived the performance of the heroes whom he commemorated. L. G. agreed, and said that this had not occurred to him before. He spoke of Bryan's speeches, the one which begins, "I have run the race, I have fought the fight, I have kept the faith," and the other which contains the well-known passage, "Labour crucified on a cross of gold." Curiously L. G. has not read President Wilson's speeches, some of which are uncommonly good. As usual he referred to Chamberlain's speeches, which he said were strongest in invective.

18TH.—Dined with L. G.. We had a long talk concerning

the drink question. I strongly criticised L. G.'s big scheme. From his manner I should think it was dead. He said, "I am sure it is the best, but it may be impracticable." He said that Lansdowne and Bonar Law had agreed, also Henderson<sup>1</sup> and Snowden.<sup>2</sup> I said, "Why not deal with the matter in the 'infected areas,' if necessary granting compensation?"

L. G.: Well, there is not so much between us after all.

From this I gather that he is preparing a modified scheme on these lines. He is evidently very disappointed that his big scheme has broken down. He said, "The future of this country depends on what takes place during the next five years—perhaps the next five months. That is why the drink question is so important."

20TH.—Spent an hour with Northcliffe, who spoke in contemptuous terms of Asquith and Kitchener. He says that the former is indolent, weak, and apathetic. He exercises no control over the various departments. He will never finish the war. L. G. may be the man. He is the best of the lot. He (N.) says K. is misrepresenting the facts about the French objection to correspondents. N. thinks well of Sir John French. N. is quite a good listener and very receptive.

21ST.—Robertson Nicoll is much annoyed at Asquith's Newcastle speech,<sup>3</sup> and says he is disgusted with his management of affairs. His nerveless hand, etc. He says that Asquith puts L. G. to do all the dirty work and that L. G. has far too much work in hand.

22ND.—Long talk with Kitchener, who said that L. G.'s alleged statement as to the number of troops in France was inaccurate and that what L. G. had really said was that the number of troops "overseas" amounted to thirty-six divisions. I referred to the speech, in which the words were "over there." K. said, "Well, if he said that he was wrong, and the speech must be put right in Hansard." He asked Brade to see that this was done.

K. commented upon what he called "newspaper embroidery" and complained of the criticisms as to the incon-

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. Arthur Henderson.

<sup>2</sup> Now Viscount Snowden.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 100.

sistencies between his statements and those of the P.M. as to the efficiency of our output of munitions of war. He asked my opinion. I replied that they seemed inconsistent and that this was the general opinion. K. said, "*The Times* has been the most virulent critic, I am told, but I never read it." He asked me to look up the speeches, which I did subsequently, and wrote to him setting out the two passages.

K. spoke with emotion of the bravery of the troops in the recent fighting, and of the brutal manner in which the Germans have been treating our men. I said something regarding one of French's dispatches. K. replied, "The truth is, I have not read it."

✓ Spent an hour with Winston. Long discussion regarding contradiction of fake paragraphs submitted by the Press. Winston said the Admiralty could not undertake the responsibility of appending notes stating that allegations were untrue. The Press might assume that the Admiralty receive first news of all important events, which news would be published immediately. Consequently in absence of an intimation from the Admiralty, the Press may assume that news which they receive is untrue. I said, "Surely the Press Bureau should endeavour to prevent the dissemination of false information, which the Press would be anxious to suppress if they knew it to be false?" Winston would not have this, and ultimately said he would write me a letter setting forth his views. (This he did.) He complained that he had been misrepresented by the Press. He said, "The Press do not understand that we are gentlemen. We tell the truth. We are entitled to be trusted. We have concealed nothing but the *Audacious*<sup>1</sup> and the loss of some submarines. You know why the *Audacious* was concealed." He asked me to explain this, and concluded, "I look to you to see that justice is done to the Admiralty in this matter." I urged the necessity for war correspondents in France. Winston said, "Why don't you get a deputation to the

<sup>1</sup> The battleship *Audacious* was mined on October 26th, 1914, while carrying out firing practice off Lough Swilly. Her loss was kept secret because war with Turkey at that time hung in the balance, and also because Belgian coast operations were in progress, and it was inadvisable to advertise that the Grand Fleet, to which the *Audacious* belonged, was as far off as the north of Ireland.

Prime Minister? If you do, I will support you. Kitchener is all wrong about this." When I asked K. if he would not give badges to the reporters at the Press Bureau, he replied, "You had better go over the road [the Admiralty]. We don't do that sort of thing here, but I believe they do." He was also careful to indicate that he had proposed sending the correspondents with the Dardanelles Expedition.

Winston spoke freely regarding the Dardanelles Expedition. He again referred to the imminence of a great battle. He said that the Turks had now fortified positions formerly unfortified and that the lives of many of our men might be lost in consequence. He said that his calculations had in a measure been put out by the mobility of the Turkish guns, which enabled them to train readily on the ships which were confined in a narrow area. Originally it had been thought that the attack might be successful by sea alone, but this had proved impracticable. This war could not be won by sitting still, as some people thought. Offensive operations were necessary, but before deciding on a plan which might, and probably would, result in the loss of many valuable lives, Winston had given the whole subject most anxious consideration. If the operation is successful, its effects will be most important. They are worth the risk. It is better to risk lives in this way than to allow the war to drag on indefinitely. If the operation is unsuccessful, Winston recognises that the effect on his career may be serious. "They may get rid of me," he said. "If they do, I cannot help it. I shall have done my best. My regiment is awaiting me." He seemed calm, but no doubt is feeling the strain.

23RD.—Hartshorn came to see me. He said that the miners' leaders had insisted on seeing the P.M.. Smillie<sup>1</sup> had made a good speech and explained that while the men were willing to sacrifice themselves in the national interest, they are not prepared to do so in the interests of the masters, who are making enormous profits. Asquith was apparently impressed and frightened at the prospect of another strike.

24TH.—Played with L. G. in the morning, and he lunched

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Robert Smillie, President of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, 1912-21.







THE LATE FIELD-MARSHAL SIR WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

[8x

with me. Still much talk on the drink question. Evidently his big scheme is definitely abandoned.

In the evening I dined with him and had a long and interesting talk. L. G. says we are very short of ammunition. We have plenty of explosives but not enough shells. Our organisation has been deplorable, while the French have made the most of their facilities, which are considerably less than ours. The result is that they are turning out four times as many shells as we are doing.

L. G. handed me notes kept by Reading and Simon of an interview they and L. G. had in September with one of the heads of the French War Office when he explained what had been done in France, and how it had been done. L. G. said that he had reported this to the Cabinet and had handed Kitchener a copy of the extracts, but nothing had been done. He said, "It makes me inclined to weep. If the country only knew, what would they not say?" We talked of the P.M.. L. G. said he would not go on without Asquith. He did not wish to be P.M.. He would hate the ceremonial. He said, "As it is, I always get my own way unless the circumstances are such that there is really good reason why I should not. The P.M. has been loyal to me and I am absolutely loyal to him. I am quite happy where I am."

The notes made by Reading and Simon stated that the French War Office had utilised every factory in France which contained suitable machinery and that the factories had been grouped and placed under the control of suitable men.

L. G. says he has a heavy week in front of him: (1) the settlement of the drink question; (2) The Munitions Committee; (3) his Budget; (4) Conference with Ribot, the French Minister of Finance. He seems tired, but not so much as one might expect.

25TH.—Long talk with the Marquis de Chasseloup Laubat, one of the Directors of Creusot's and the French representative on our high-explosive committee, who gave me a detailed description of the French organisation for producing munitions of war. He said that we had wasted many months and had failed in the direction in which the French thought we should excel. They doubted our ability speedily to raise

large armies, but thought that we should have been of great service to the Allies in supplying munitions of war. Just the contrary had happened. Our output is far behind that of the French, but should now steadily improve.

27TH.—L. G. and the Marquis de Chasseloup Laubat lunched with me at Queen Anne's Gate. The Marquis again said some pertinent things. L. G. afterwards reproduced one of his observations in his Budget speech. The Marquis said that although half the French factories are *hors de combat*, the French are turning out four times as much ammunition per week as the English, whose manufacturing capacity in normal times is far in excess of that of France.

29TH.—Long talk with Kitchener, who seemed anxious and worried. He seemed very perturbed about the noxious gases used by the Germans. He said he thought we should have to retaliate, if the public opinion of the world did not prevent the enemy from continuing these tactics. K. spoke again with much emotion of the disgraceful manner in which our men had been treated. When speaking of the noxious gases, he said, "We shall have to act. We cannot run the risk of losing our country."

Winston asked me to lunch. I could not go. Saw him at five o'clock and was with him an hour and a half.

He said, "I think the Dardanelles Expedition will be successful. The most heroic deeds have been accomplished during the past few days. Our men have been landed in the face of terrible difficulties and dangers. Miles of barbed wire; some of it sunk beneath the sea. We performed remarkable feats. The whole thing was most carefully arranged. For example, an old collier ran on to the shore. The Turks took no notice of the supposed wreck; they did not even fire at it. At the right moment 2,000 men marched out of the collier on to the shore." Winston then showed me the map marked with the areas in the occupation of the Allies. The map was in a huge atlas which he opened and closed with some labour. We both leaned over the map and studied the position, which he traced with his finger. He said, "This is one of the great campaigns of history. Think what Constantinople is to the East. It is more than London, Paris, and Berlin all rolled into one are to

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the West. Think how it has dominated the East. Think what its fall will mean. Think how it will affect Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania, and Italy, who have already been affected by what has taken place. You cannot win this war by sitting still. We are merely using our surplus ships in the Dardanelles. Most of them are old vessels. The ammunition, even the rifle ammunition, is different from that which we are using in France—an older type—so there is no loss of power there. I am not responsible for the Expedition; the whole details were approved by the Cabinet and Admiralty Board. I do not shirk responsibility, but it is untrue to say that I have done this off my own bat. I have followed every detail. Fisher and I have a perfect understanding.”

## Chapter XIII

*Kitchener on American intervention—Colonel Repington at G.H.Q.—Fisher resigns—Preparation for a Coalition—A Press attack on Kitchener.*

MAY 1ST, 1915.—L. G. played golf and lunched. He seemed well and full of spirits, notwithstanding his troubles regarding the drink question. His vitality is remarkable. He again spoke strongly on the necessity for concentration on the war, and referred with approval to a letter which I wrote to *The Times* yesterday regarding the action of the local authorities in proceeding with public works and advertising for able-bodied men. Masterman lunched. He looks very broken and more untidy than ever. Funnily he referred to A. C. Morton, M.P.,<sup>1</sup> as an untidy, shabby-looking man. A. C. M. is often an Adonis compared with Masterman.

2ND.—Walked with L. G.. He talks of nothing but the war, which he prophesies will be a long affair. He said, "I fear that eighteen months or two years hence we shall be in just the same mess—trenches blown up—air raids—destroyers sunk. In fact, I am confident that the war will last a long time—perhaps three years." He then went on to refer to the Napoleonic wars and the time occupied in vanquishing France, notwithstanding that all Europe was against her.

4TH.—Interesting interview with Northcliffe, who strongly expressed the opinion that reflection had assured him that the war would continue for years. He said, "I am keenly alive to my responsibilities. I am not carrying on *The Times* and *Daily Mail* from a business point of view. I have a huge income, and might spend my time fishing and amusing myself, but I feel my responsibility to the nation. I feel that I must remain to guide and criticise." After this he made some shrewd observations on passing events.

6TH.—Long talk with Kitchener, who has a bad cold. He

<sup>1</sup> Later Sir Alpheus Morton; d. 1923.

says he will retaliate against the Germans for using poisonous gases. He added, "I shall put a bit of extra spice in." In response to my questions he went on to say that there need be no anxiety regarding the size of the British Army in France. The policy was gradually to increase the Army. He believed that the German forces would gradually be worn down. In so far as concerned munitions, there had recently been a marked improvement in production. The Trade Unions had been rendering good service by increasing the number of men available for the manufacture of munitions, but he hoped the country would not relax its efforts in that direction. He hoped the newspapers would urge the necessity for more skilled workers and point out the advisability of postponing work that did not press and for the execution of which skilled labour is necessary. Kitchener also told me that some of the local authorities were asking employers to furnish returns of all men of military age in their service.

We talked of his country house, Broome Hall. He asked me to try to find him a Georgian chandelier, a large one, and some Jacobean furniture. He said, "The things must be cheap. They don't pay me enough to enable me to pay high prices." His secretary (Creedy)<sup>1</sup> has made a little picture gallery of the portraits of ladies who have sent their photographs to K. They are the ugliest lot God ever made. Most amusing.

13TH.—Long talk with Kitchener, who began by saying, "I suppose you have come to put me through my weekly cross-examination." I replied, "No. I have come to receive such information as you are good enough to impart." He laughed, and then proceeded to make a long and most interesting statement concerning the political and strategic reasons for the Dardanelles Expedition and American intervention. He said he observed with regret the tendency on the part of some of the newspapers to argue that because of the smallness of the American Fleet and the American Army, the intervention of America in the war as an enemy of Germany would have little effect on the result. He thinks this most unfortunate

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Herbert Creedy; Private Secretary to Secretaries of State for War, 1913-20; now Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War.

and damaging to the public welfare. On the question of whether the Press should urge America to take part in the war, he answered in the negative. America must make her own choice. He said he should like to have the organisation of the American Forces, and that the British public did not appreciate the power of a great industrial nation comprising 90,000,000 people. K. waxed quite eloquent on the subject, and said that American intervention would probably shorten the war considerably.

With regard to the Dardanelles Expedition, he said there was much misapprehension. It was of the greatest importance from a political and military point of view. The effect upon the Balkan States and South Europe has been remarkable. Had it not been for these operations it is impossible to say what would have happened in these areas. He added that the magnitude of the operations and loss of life were matters for regret, but they were unavoidable incidents of a necessary campaign. The naval and military operations will be vigorously pushed to a conclusion, but all due precautions will be exercised to ensure that men and munitions required for the war in the West are not diverted to the East. He spoke in strong terms regarding the necessity for impressing the Balkan States and Southern Europe, and I understood that the Germans view our proceedings in the Dardanelles with much anger and apprehension.

Brade told me that Colonel Repington, *The Times* correspondent, is at French's headquarters. K. has never been consulted, which is a distinct breach of the arrangement.

Long talk with X., who told me he had written me a strong letter in reply to one from me criticising certain of the arrangements at the Bureau, a topic which had been discussed at the last meeting of the N.P.A.. I said, "I hope you will forgive me for making a suggestion. Take my advice and allow me to return the letter. Why exacerbate the Press? What they say is quite reasonable. Give the soft answer, and if they are right, remedy the defect. If they are wrong, explain after inquiry and do nothing more. Why quarrel? Some Government officials seem to think that perpetual quarrels with the public are evidence of power and efficiency. The popular idea

is that people of this sort are like a man who prefers sitting on a wasps' nest to being seated in a comfortable easy chair." X. took it well and said, "I think you are right. I will try to stop the letter and write another." Which he did. A very tactful letter, which I shall read to the N.P.A., who will be pleased with it.

14TH.—Baird of Belfast<sup>1</sup> called regarding the issue of my *communiqués* to Irish papers—a difficult subject, as some of them have not been very loyal in dealing with secret papers. However, I take the view that united action will be best achieved by trusting all newspapers of standing, including the Irish. I now have seventy-eight papers on my list, and there is no doubt that these letters are doing useful work.

16TH.—It is said that French is acting most disloyally to Kitchener, and that the article by Repington which appeared in *The Times* two or three days ago, in which it was alleged that K. had neglected to supply the Army with high-explosive shells, was inspired by French.

It is suggested that French is endeavouring to work up a Press campaign in his own favour.

17TH.—Northcliffe telephoned yesterday asking me to make an appointment for him to see L. G. to-day, which I did. Later Northcliffe telephoned saying that he had had an hour's talk with L. G., which he (N.) described as "Very useful." He said that L. G. wanted to see Colonel Repington, and that he, Northcliffe, had arranged for them to meet at my house. Repington came at 7 o'clock. I was not there. L. G. sent a messenger to take R. to the House of Commons, where he had a long talk with him. L. G. did not tell me what transpired.

18TH.—Harry Lawson (*Daily Telegraph*) sent for me. He says that FitzGerald,<sup>2</sup> French's private secretary, has been to see him. FitzGerald was formerly a stockbroker. He explained that he had come because he thought that Lawson might have misunderstood the circumstances under which Repington's article in *The Times* had been written. Repington had been staying with French as his private guest. French had

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert Baird, the newspaper proprietor.

<sup>2</sup> Lieut.-Colonel Brinsley FitzGerald.



applied to Kitchener for a certain percentage of high explosives which had not been supplied. In order to remedy matters, French had given the information to Repington for publication in *The Times*. FitzGerald concluded by inviting Harry Lawson to visit French and by disclaiming on behalf of French and his staff all desire to give preferential treatment to *The Times*.

18TH.—The bombshell has fallen. Fisher has resigned. A Coalition Government is in the making. Brade says there is another dispatch from Repington which he, Brade, has referred to K. and the Prime Minister, who were considering whether they should permit publication. They did, but the message was severely cut.

19TH.—The Liberal Party looks as if it were dead. I went to the House of Commons to see L. G.. Waited in his secretary's room for an hour. Intense excitement. The L.C.J. and the Attorney-General (Simon) came in among others. The L.C.J. described Simon as one of the most remarkable legal minds of the last hundred years. This in Simon's absence.

The main topic—the bombshell and the fate of the Liberal Party. The Liberals are mad to see the prospect of a Coalition. At last I saw L. G., who had been detained by one Bishop Furse,<sup>1</sup> an ecclesiastic about 6 ft. 6 in. tall, with voice and language to correspond.

I told L. G. that the state of affairs between Kitchener and French was lamentable, and that Brade thought K. had not put his case properly before his colleagues.

I read L. G. the resolution which had been passed by the Newspaper Proprietors' Association regarding Repington's dispatches. I also said that the position of Girouard<sup>2</sup> and Booth was most unsatisfactory. I suggested that L. G. should see Brade. L. G. proposed that we should dine together, which we did. The Attorney-General came also. Brade was late. Before he arrived L. G. described an interview which he had had with Winston, who had been turned over to him by the Prime Minister.

When Brade arrived we had a long talk on the War Office

<sup>1</sup> Bishop of Pretoria, 1909–20; now of St. Albans.

<sup>2</sup> Colonel Sir Percy Girouard, Director-General of Munitions Supply, 1915.

position. Brade spoke in high terms of K., who, he said, had suffered from his loyalty to his colleagues and subordinates. L. G. said that K. had acted badly in keeping back information, particularly French's demands for high explosives, from the Cabinet and L. G. as Chairman of the Munitions Committee. He said that if the facts were stated to the House of Commons, there would be a terrible row. L. G. added that he had got the information from a private source. Kitchener would have to give up this part of the organisation. L. G. intimated that the P.M. wanted him to become Secretary for War, but that he did not feel disposed to accept the position. He talked with Brade of alternative arrangements—for example, that K. should become Commander-in-Chief. Brade explained the technical questions involved. I then left L. G. and Brade together and waited for nearly an hour outside the private room at the Savoy in which we were dining. At length they appeared and L. G. arranged to see Brade again in the morning. I walked home with L. G., who said that in view of the position at the Admiralty and War Office, a Coalition was the only possible solution. He said that Mrs. L. G. had begged him not to go to the War Office and that Mrs. Asquith had done the same. He said he did not want to go. I told him I thought he would do well to leave K. as Secretary of State for War and take over the whole control of the munitions. We parted at his door. He walked with wonderful briskness. On the way to the Savoy he gave me an amusing imitation of a long dull speech which had been delivered by an Oxford Don, and laughed heartily at the recollection. His vitality is remarkable. He said that Winston would have to leave the Admiralty, but that a place would have to be found for him. McKenna will stay.

20TH.—Called to see Winston at the Admiralty. Found him in his room. He looked very worn out and harassed. He greeted me warmly and said, "I am the victim of a political intrigue. I am finished!" I said, "Not finished at forty, with your remarkable powers!" "Yes," he said. "Finished in respect of all I care for—the waging of war; the defeat of the Germans. I have had a high place offered to me—a position which has been occupied by many distinguished men, and which carries with it a high salary. But that all goes for

nothing. This is what I live for. I have prepared a statement of my case, but cannot use it. The foreign situation prevents me from doing so. I will show you the statement." He then obtained it from his secretary. I read it. Shortly the effect was that every disposition of ships and the decision on every question of policy had been sanctioned by Fisher, and that the naval attempt to force the Dardanelles had been advised by Admiral Carden<sup>1</sup> and confirmed by Admiral de Robeck, his successor. I handed the statement back to Winston, who continued, "I have received the greatest compliment I have ever had in my life. Sir Arthur Wilson<sup>2</sup> ("Tug" Wilson), who has been working here for months—a man who has no ambition but the good of the Navy and his country—has written to the Prime Minister saying that he would serve as First Sea Lord under me, and not only that, but that he would serve under no one else."

We talked of Kitchener and French. I said, "Do you think French was justified in causing Repington to write that inspired article regarding shells which appeared in *The Times*? Should he not have written to the Prime Minister?" Winston replied, "The poor devil is fighting for his life."

R.: Do you think the P.M. has been weak in the conduct of the war?

WINSTON: Terribly weak—supinely weak. His weakness will be the death of him.

I had an interview with Sir Graham Greene, Secretary of the Admiralty, who said that the incident was most unfortunate and paralysing. He spoke in high terms of Winston and his work, but seemed doubtful of Fisher's capacity owing to his age. I should add that Winston said Fisher had left all direction to him, although he had sanctioned all that had been done, and that Fisher had been mainly engaged in constructional work. He said, "The danger is the Dardanelles." He (Winston) would remain with the Government for a while, but rather intimated he would go to France eventually.

Brade came to lunch. He says Winston is going—that is

<sup>1</sup> Commander Allied Squadrons in the Eastern Mediterranean, September 1914 to March 1915.

<sup>2</sup> d. 1921.

certain. After leaving us last night Brade saw Max Aitken,<sup>1</sup> who is acting for Bonar Law, and ultimately saw Bonar himself. Bonar Law is strongly opposed to Kitchener. Aitken says he has advised Bonar Law not to go to the War Office. I saw Brade later. He says he has had an interview with L. G., Bonar Law, and McKenna this morning. L. G. then proposed that Kitchener should stay on as Secretary of State for War and that he, L. G., should take over Munitions. Bonar Law would not agree, nor would he agree that K. should remain in the Cabinet. He said that he must consult his party, as, although the Coalition was practically agreed upon, he must consult with his people until the final arrangements had been made.

21ST.—Violent attack in the *Daily Mail* to-day upon Kitchener. It alleges that he has neglected the manufacture of high-explosive shells and has supplied the Army with too much shrapnel. Brade sent for me. He said that last night Kitchener had telephoned, asking him to see him at 11, Kitchener having just arrived from his visit to the munition areas. K. was tired and evidently harassed by the position of affairs. Brade told him of his interview and apologised for interfering. K. said he had done the right thing. K. proposed that he should remain as Joint Secretary for War, and also that he should be appointed Commander-in-Chief. He intimated, however, that he would not care to act with L. G. as his colleague. This morning Brade saw Bonar Law at his house, Pembroke Lodge, when B. L. said he would not agree to K.'s proposal that he should act as Joint Secretary and Commander-in-Chief. He proposed that K. should accept the latter position without a seat in the Cabinet. B. L. and Balfour do not believe in K.. They believe he has a way of concealing things, etc. Brade then again saw K., who said he would retire altogether. He did not want to go on. Brade said this was impossible in the national interest. K. then said that if it was insisted upon, he would take the post of Commander-in-Chief as proposed, but that having regard to his relations with French, the arrangements would break down in a week. Ultimately he conveyed to Brade that he would be willing to waive the position as Commander-in-Chief and act as Joint Secretary for War.

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Beaverbrook.

Brade telephoned this to Bonar Law, who said he would consult his people, and that if they agreed he would send Sir Edward Carson to see Brade to ascertain whether it would be possible to define the respective positions of the War Secretaries. There the matter rests, but Brade expects to see Carson this afternoon. Brade says that he has been examining K.'s case in reply to the *Daily Mail* article, which Brade was perusing for the first time when I arrived at 5 p.m. K. had not seen it! No one had brought it to his attention. He does not read newspapers very much. Brade says Von Donop's case is very weak. He admits that instead of preparing the high-explosive material, the shell cases, and the fuses and other details *pari passu*, he had confined himself in the first instance to solving the difficulties as to manufacture of high-explosive material, leaving other difficulties to be dealt with later on.

## Chapter XIV

*The new Cabinet—Churchill packs up—Conservative opposition to Kitchener—His strained relations with French—L. G. as Minister of Munitions.*

22ND.—*Daily Mail* burnt at Stock Exchange, Baltic, etc.. Great public indignation at attacks on Kitchener.

The political situation has taken an amazing turn this week. The inner conclave were the P.M., L. G., Grey, Crewe, and Winston. No one else really mattered. Now McKenna seems to have replaced Winston. (I hear through Lady Lyttelton—a great friend of Fisher's—that one difficulty between Winston and Fisher was that the latter goes to bed at 9 p.m. and rises at 4 a.m., whereas Winston liked to do much of the naval consultation work between 10 p.m. and 1 a.m.)

23RD.—Dined with L. G. at his house at Walton. He says the Cabinet crisis came very quickly. He expected it, and Grey thought it inevitable, but all the same it came like a bombshell. He was just about to leave Downing Street on Saturday morning to meet me at Walton, when Fisher arrived. He said, "I want to speak to you," and then, in the presence of the messengers, he blurted out, "I have resigned. I can stand it no longer. Our ships are being sunk while we have a fleet in the Dardanelles which is bigger than the German Navy. Both our Navy and Army are being bled for the benefit of the Dardanelles Expedition. I have resigned and am going to Scotland." L. G. at once saw the P.M., who said, "Fisher is always resigning. This is nothing new." L. G. replied, "I think he really means it this time." Whereupon the P.M. began to think that the position might be serious. McKenna telephoned to L. G. that night saying that Fisher's resignation was final. On the Sunday or the Monday, Bonar Law came to see L. G. at the Treasury. He was very excited, and said, "You know what I have come about. Fisher has resigned. Either I must raise this in the House of Commons, or we must

have a National Government." Bonar Law went on to propose that L. G. should be Premier, but he said he could not accept the position. He could not act in competition with Asquith, who had always treated him well. L. G. told the P.M. what Bonar Law had said, but omitting B. L.'s proposal as to the Premiership, as L. G. thought this information might unnerve Asquith in his dealings with the new people.

L. G. said he had fought to get Winston high office—the Colonies, the India Office, the Viceroyalty of India. His colleagues would not, however, agree to Winston's having anything but a minor position. They would not listen to India, where things were in an unsettled state. He said that Winston had acted unwisely. He had written some unwise letters to the P.M., who had been angry and had written Winston a sharp letter in reply.

L. G. was doubtful how long the new Cabinet would last. The present Cabinet, he said, had been a very friendly body. Asquith is a very good-tempered person and had imparted that quality to his Cabinet, in which respect he was like Campbell-Bannerman, who frequently avoided a scene by telling some quite irrelevant humorous story, which created a fresh atmosphere.

L. G. is sorry for Winston. He referred to the latter's remarkable gifts and said this blow will really be the making of him. L. G. spoke strongly concerning Kitchener, who had concealed serious things from his colleagues. The P.M. knew nothing of French's demand for high-explosive shells. According to what the P.M. told L. G., Kitchener had said French was getting all he wanted and he (Asquith) had framed his Newcastle speech accordingly.<sup>1</sup> I said, "I hope you are not going to the War Office." L. G. replied, "No, I shall stay at the Treasury. I had a touching interview the other morning. The maid came to my room, and told me that the Governor of the Bank of England (Lord Cunliffe) wanted to see me. I went down. The old boy blundered out, 'I hear they want you to leave the Treasury. We cannot let you go!' And then he quite broke down, and the tears trickled down his cheeks."

L. G. continued, "Kitchener would never act as a sub-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 100.

ordinate. As to the munitions, either K. did not know or appreciate what French wanted, or he concealed it."

R. : You must take a man with his defects as well as his virtues. The public believe in K.. Remember his difficulties in adapting himself to your methods. He has been accustomed to work in his own way, without equals or critics. He probably does not appreciate the necessity for full disclosures to his colleagues. Or perhaps he does not read French's dispatches, but relies on his subordinates to tell him of the material portions. French has acted badly. Why did he not write to the P.M. or to you?

L. G. : I suppose he thought it would be a breach of discipline.

R. : But surely it was a worse breach of discipline to stir up an agitation in the country. Why did he not write to Asquith? This Government has its defects, but it is receptive when properly approached. Either you or Asquith would have taken the matter up.

(L. G. agreed with this.)

Kitchener has asked me to send out a memorandum requesting editors to say nothing concerning the Commander-in-Chief which would tend to weaken his authority with the Army.

R. : I hear Simon has declined the Woolsack.

L. G. : Quite true; he has. A remarkable thing for a man of forty-two to do. The blue ribbon of the legal profession.

We talked of L. G.'s speech on Hugh Price Hughes.<sup>1</sup> When I saw him on Wednesday, he said, "Did you notice an illustration I used in my speech? It would please you." I had not seen a verbatim of the speech, so did not know to what he referred. To-night I said, "I have read a fairly full account of your speech. I suppose the illustration you mentioned was that from Gogol's *Dead Souls*?"

L. G. : No, a better one than that. None of the papers gave it. It was, I think, one of the best things I have ever done. I was describing H. P. H.'s disregard of wealth and material prosperity. I said, "In South Wales there is a river called the Towy. In its lower reaches it meanders through fat pastures—

<sup>1</sup> The famous Wesleyan preacher and reformer, 1847-1902.



a slow, turgid, muddy stream. In its higher reaches, it is a turbulent, violent stream, but the water is clear and bright."

L. G. repeated this part of his speech with great dramatic power, and finished by saying, "Hughes and men like him resemble the Towy at its best."

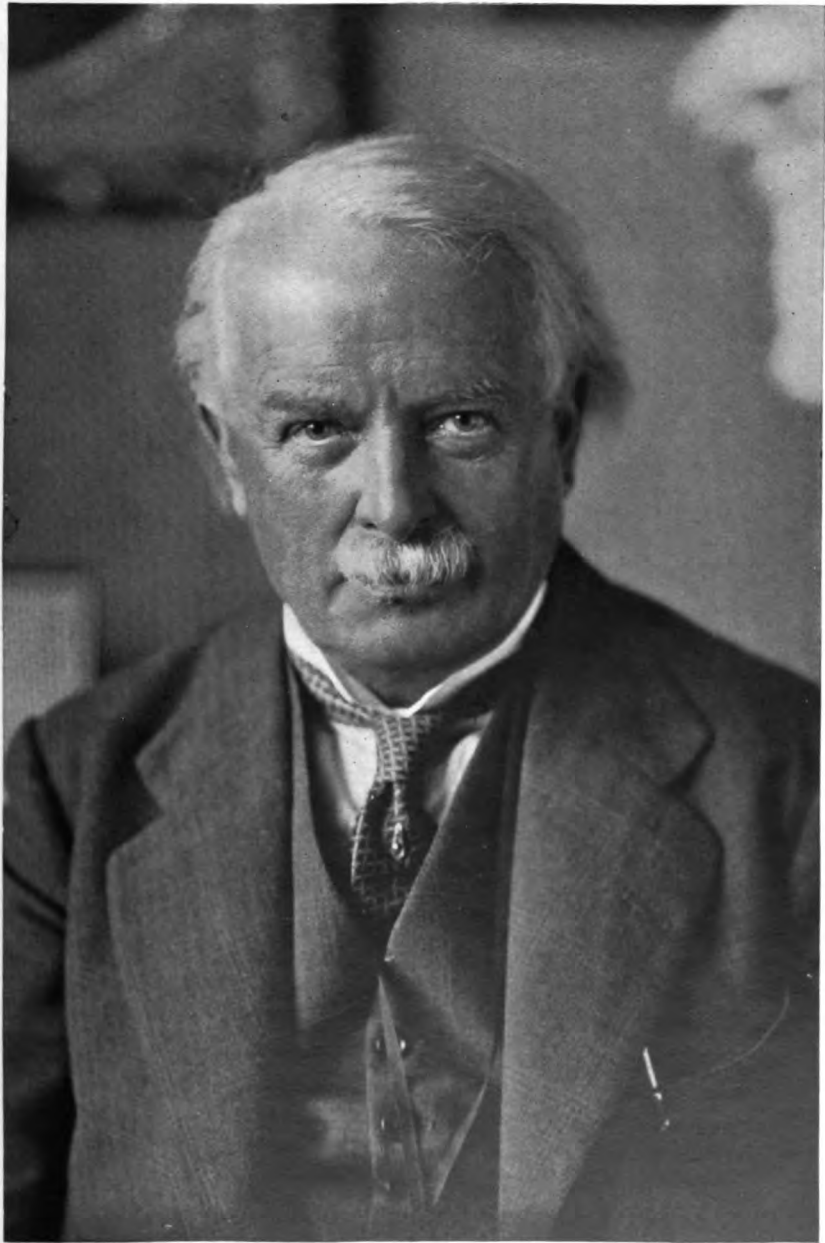
R.: Rich, well-dressed prophets are never effective. Poverty and prophecy must always go hand-in-hand. Your speech was a fine piece of poetry.

25TH.—Northcliffe telephoned to say he had heard it said that his attack on Kitchener was due to a personal quarrel. He wished me to deny the statement if I heard it. He then told me that he had been to see L. G. at Walton Heath on Sunday morning (this is Tuesday), and that he had urged L. G. to go to the War Office. I said I doubted if he would go. N. seemed in a worried condition and said he could not shake the war off.

26TH.—Called to see Brade, who told me that last night he had a conference with Bonar Law, Carson, and Austen Chamberlain, at Max Aitken's flat, when Kitchener's position was discussed at length. They are not at all friendly to K.. Brade said it was decided only yesterday that L. G. should take the position of Minister of Munitions, but I doubt whether Brade really knows the facts. He says the Prime Minister is going to France on Monday to see French, with the object of preventing a repetition of the recent incident with *The Times* and endeavouring to establish a satisfactory relationship between French and Kitchener. The latter has sent Lord Esher to see French to request him not to allow any differences between them to injure the Army and national interests.

Called to see L. G. at Walton. He came out and walked with me in the garden. The names of the new Cabinet were announced this morning. I said, "I see you are going to take over the munitions." "Yes," he replied, "I had to do it. They all wanted me to, and the King was anxious that I should. It will be a temporary arrangement only. I shall go back to the Treasury and shall retain my house at Downing Street, which I shall probably use as the offices of my department."

He again remarked that Kitchener had acted badly in withholding information. I repeated what I had said as to the



THE RT. HON. DAVID LLOYD GEORGE.



obvious course which French should have taken. L. G. said, "Yes, he did the wrong thing."

Called at the Admiralty to see Winston's secretary. Winston came out and took me into his room, and I afterwards walked with him to the Bath Club. As he left the Admiralty, he said, "I leave the nation a Navy in a state of perfect efficiency. I cannot say more." He then talked of the political situation, concerning which he made a few bitter remarks. He then said, "I shall give the Government my support. I shall make a few speeches and then I shall go to the Front. I could not continue to hold a sinecure office at such a time."

27TH.—Interview with Kitchener and Brade. K. said (referring to the attack upon him in the Northcliffe papers), "This has been a sad and worrying time. It is terrible to think that such a breach of discipline should have taken place in the Army, and that such lies, such damned lies, should have been circulated. Under ordinary circumstances I should have taken measures. But in the face of the Germans, what can I do? French has plenty of ammunition at Havre. Why does he leave it there? Here are the figures." He then read the details from a paper on his table, from which it appeared that French has 689 rounds of high-explosive shells per gun, in addition to shrapnel, etc.. K. said, "I am sending him 23,000 rounds to-night, and a consignment is forwarded every night. I would rather have been kicked from one end of the country to the other than have had the Army dragged through the mire in this way." He seemed very much worried and upset and evidently feels very strongly regarding French's share in the transaction.

29TH.—Drove L. G. to Walton, played golf with him and dined with him in the evening. Masterman came to dinner also.

L. G. spoke at length regarding his new position as Minister of Munitions. He said that the arrangements were deplorable. I inquired why Curzon<sup>1</sup> had been made a member of the Munitions Committee. L. G. replied, "He had nothing to do. At yesterday's meeting K. took no notice of him, so that at last Curzon addressed all his remarks to me as Chairman. It was rather painful."

<sup>1</sup> The Marquess Curzon of Kedleston, Lord Privy Seal, 1915-16; d. 1925.

L. G. told me it would be some time before the new organisation could become effective, and that the experiment of getting shells manufactured by firms unaccustomed to that class of work might in the first instance lead to the production of unsuitable or ineffective shells, but he hoped these difficulties would be gradually overcome, as they had been in France. He said that K. was very sagacious and far-sighted, and that he was the only man who had realised the magnitude of the struggle from the first.

We talked of the Dardanelles Expedition. L. G. said that the calculations had gone hopelessly astray. The Cabinet had been told that the peninsula was a table-land, which could be swept by the guns of the Fleet, whereas it had proved that the configuration of the ground is such that the Turkish troops can easily take cover.

I told L. G. that I proposed to issue a note to the Press regarding his action as to munitions. This I drafted and he revised the draft in his own handwriting.

Masterman and Donald of the *Daily Chronicle*, who played golf with us in the morning, both took up the position that Asquith had made a mistake in agreeing to the Coalition. L. G. strongly dissented. I asked him how the first meeting of the new Cabinet had gone off. He said that the P.M. seemed nervous. He also said it seemed strange to be sitting in council with the men to whom he had been for so long opposed, but that there was nothing to show that the Cabinet was composed of conflicting forces. Bonar Law now sits next to L. G. The new Members do not sit together. Bonar Law said he thought it better they should not sit in groups.

When speaking of the Dardanelles, L. G. said that K. had his share in the responsibility, and that at a dinner at which L. G., Winston, and K. were the only persons present, K. had estimated the losses at 5,000, while Winston, who wished to be even more conservative in his estimate, had placed them at 8,000.

## Chapter XV

*Northcliffe as critic—Asquith's Newcastle speech—Friction over the Munitions Ministry—Balfour on the submarine menace—Liberals disgruntled with L. G.*

JUNE 3RD, 1915.—Northcliffe telephoned that French was in London and that he wanted to see L. G.. French suggested a meeting at the house in Lancaster Gate occupied jointly by French and Moore. N. said that L. G. should not go there and suggested a meeting at my house. I promised to communicate with L. G.'s secretary, L. G. being at Manchester. This I did, and explained the position. Davies, the secretary, said he had instructions to see French and make an appointment. He agreed as to the inadvisability of a meeting at Lancaster Gate.

4TH.—Brade says that French has returned with the P.M.. Also that French has been very silent since the recent row regarding the information furnished to *The Times*.

5TH.—Played with L. G. and the L.C.J.. Robertson Nicoll came to Walton to see L. G..

I spoke at a Printers' Charity Dinner, Northcliffe in the chair. I sat next to him. He spoke to me at length regarding the war. He said he intended to attack Kitchener again, and also to attack Asquith, of whom he spoke in slighting terms. He also spoke in the same sense of all the Ministers but L. G., who, he said, would have to become Premier. I said, "How about Grey?" N. replied, "He managed the war diplomacy well, but does not understand the war." N. prophesies that the war will last for years and says that very probably none of the Ministers or generals now in power will be permitted by the people to see the war to a conclusion. I said, "You must give the new Government a chance. You have no one better to suggest." To this he replied, "Someone will turn up. The war will disclose a genius."

Earlier in the day I received four telegrams from North-

cliffe asking me to arrange a meeting between him and L. G., to-morrow, Sunday. L. G. appointed 3 p.m. at Walton.

I drove home with the L.C.J., who spoke very gloomily of the situation. He thinks the present state of unrest in the public mind very unsatisfactory, and said that he had advised the P.M. to make a speech to allay public anxiety. The L.C.J. said that L. G. had asked him to attend the Munitions Committee this morning, and had subsequently told him that his object was to get his opinion of the men who are working with him.

6TH.—Called to see L. G. at his house at 10 a.m.. He thinks Northcliffe is now doing harm by his continual criticism, and added, "I shall tell him so, but I still think he did the right thing in publishing his first attack in *The Times*."

L. G. then proceeded to speak of Kitchener. He said, "If I were to show you the figures, you would agree with me that he covered up and distorted the facts. The P.M. hates unpleasant facts and is always glad of an excuse to disbelieve them. When the question of ammunition was raised by me at the War Council, McKenna subsequently brought forward figures which convinced the P.M. that I was wrong."

"The P.M. made a most unfortunate speech at Elswick. That was on the faith of K.'s statement that French had written a certain letter stating that he was satisfied with the ammunition, etc.. There never was any such letter. The P.M. has only now learned the truth."

(This is an extraordinary story which wants careful sifting.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Both Mr. Lloyd George and the Prime Minister were apparently mistaken in blaming Kitchener. French wrote no letter, but he had an interview with Kitchener at the War Office on April 14th, six days before Mr. Asquith's speech. Kitchener wrote to Asquith immediately afterwards: "He (French) told me I could let you know that, with the present supply of ammunition, he will have as much as his troops will be able to use in the next forward movement." The existence of this letter was disclosed by Asquith in a speech at the Connaught Rooms on June 2nd, 1919, in which he replied to charges in French's book, "1914," and justified his Newcastle speech. On May 2nd, according to the *Life of Lord Kitchener* (vol. iii, p. 236), French was still able to write to Kitchener that he was making plans for the "big operation" and that "the ammunition will be all right." The episode is dealt with fully in *The Life of Lord Oxford and Asquith* (vol. ii, pp. 142 *et seq.*).

I told L. G. that I thought he must be careful not to confirm the impression now existing amongst the working-classes that he was attacking them for lack of patriotism. I said I thought his speeches in the North were open to this criticism, and that the L.C.J. thought the same. L. G. did not admit this, but added, "So far as I know, the employers are all anxious to do what they can. If they neglect their duty, I will attack them. But I shall not do so unless I am satisfied there is good cause."

R.: I don't want you to attack anyone. But you must make it clear that there is to be equality of sacrifice. The employers are making as much profit as they can, and the workman is trying to do the same in his own way.

L. G.: But I shall take the employers' profits.

R.: The people don't know that. Everyone is preaching to the working-man, and unless you are careful, you will irritate him. You must make it clear that piece-work rates will not be diminished because men are able to make large wages if they work hard.

L. G.: You want me to reassure them on that point? I think you are right. The rates should not be cut down. (He made a written note of this.)

Yesterday I had a talk with L. G. and Sir Alexander Kennedy<sup>1</sup> as to the composition of the Munitions Committee. L. G. asked Kennedy to serve and supply him with a list of names of other suitable engineers. I said, "Not old-fashioned figureheads, but real, active practical men."

L. G.: Yes, that is what I want.

Much talk yesterday regarding Campbell's<sup>2</sup> proposed appointment as Lord Chancellor of Ireland, which Robertson Nicoll and Donald prophesy will wreck the Government, as the Irish Party will strongly oppose it. L. G. and the L.C.J. both disagreed. Donald said the Irish Party intended to have a debate, to which L. G. responded, "No one can prevent them from saying what they want to say, but there will be no debate. If necessary, the Government will go to the country."

<sup>1</sup> Past President Inst. of Civil Engineers and Inst. of Mining Engineers; d. 1928.

<sup>2</sup> Later Lord Glenavy; d. 1931.



*Later in the afternoon.*

Saw L. G. again, when he said that Northcliffe had been with him for an hour and a half, but why he came he (L. G.) did not know. L. G. added, "He is a most extraordinary person."

8TH.—Brade seems very anxious regarding the situation created by the formation of the new Munitions Department. Evidently there is great difficulty in defining its relations with the War Office. I understand that L. G. objects to the War Office instructing the Munitions Department as to types and quantities of ammunition required. Brade describes the situation as "highly explosive."

9TH.—Nicoll says that on Saturday L. G. told him that before accepting the position of Munitions Minister he had stipulated certain conditions which had not been performed, and that he had asked his advice whether he should resign if they were not fulfilled. Nicoll (most unwisely I think) had advised him in the affirmative. L. G. gave Nicoll, so he said, a most depressing account of the situation, including a statement by the P.M. to the effect that our trenches were inadequate and not to be compared with those of the French Army. Nicoll has written what I regard as an injudicious article in the *British Weekly*. Whether he has overstated what L. G. said, I do not know.

Nicoll and L. G. concocted a letter in reply to one from Northcliffe to Nicoll saying that L. G. would confirm the charges made by *The Times* and *Mail* against K.. The reply went on to deprecate the manner of the attack, but I thought the joint concoction a mistake.

10TH.—Called at the Munitions Department to see L. G..

R.: Nicoll has written an extraordinary article in this week's *British Weekly*. He suggests that you intend to resign unless you get your own terms. I hope that is not true, and that you don't intend to desert the country at such a time, simply because you cannot get your own way?

L. G.: You have never known me shirk, have you? I have not read the article, but from what I hear the old man has gone too far.

R.: Let me show you what he says. [The paper was lying on his table with others. I showed him the passage.] Nicoll says that you inspired the article when you saw him on Saturday.

L. G. denied this.

11TH.—Called to see Arthur Balfour. He told me that in his opinion Winston had rather under-estimated the importance of the German submarine menace, and that we should have many more casualties. He said, "There are only two methods of dealing with submarines: you can either try to trap them with nets or similar appliances, or you can employ an enormous number of small craft against them. When I came here I gave a very large order for more small craft for the purpose." He also said that the preparation of his speech regarding the treatment of the submarine prisoners had been a difficult task, and that he proposed to hand these men over to the War Office to ensure that they would be treated in precisely the same way as all other prisoners.

He talked of L. G. and his new job at the Munitions Department. He said, "It is a big task. I wonder whether he will be successful. I am not sure that he has all the necessary qualities. He has some of them, but not others."

We spoke of the Dardanelles Expedition. A. B. said, "I think perhaps my predecessor was rather impulsive in undertaking the campaign, but we must see it through, and we shall do whatever is necessary to achieve a satisfactory result." A. B. said he would always be glad to see me whenever I wanted information. The change in the atmosphere in the room of the First Lord is very marked. In Winston's time one felt the whole machine pulsating. To-day a marked calm pervaded the First Lord's room.

One of the Civil Lords said to me, "We have a safe team, but the question is whether they will have the genius to hit the Germans on the nose when the proper time arrives." He told me that he had warned Winston when Fisher came to the Admiralty that the arrangement would not last and that Fisher would be his downfall.

Dined with Lord Murray. Present, Sir Robert Harvey,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The mining engineer and nitrate manufacturer.

Moir,<sup>1</sup> the engineer who is to be one of L. G.'s Munitions Committee, Alfred Spender of the *Westminster Gazette*, Sir Francis Hopwood,<sup>2</sup> Wolfe Murray, President of the Army Council,<sup>3</sup> and others.

Spender said that the Liberals are very disgruntled with L. G.. They believe he is going the way of Chamberlain and are much perturbed at a sentence in one of his recent speeches, in which he foreshadowed the extinction of party politics and indicated the possibility of men standing side by side who had hitherto been bitterly opposed to each other. Spender said, "Our people do not feel like that. They intend that after the war Liberal principles shall be maintained and advocated as strongly as ever." He asked what scheme I thought L. G. had in view. I replied that I did not know. Perhaps he was simply drifting on the tide of events. Spender thought he had a scheme. Moir is an able man. He says the chief difficulty in the way of producing ammunition is the scarcity of gauges and automatic machinery.

13TH.—Northcliffe telephoned to me from Broadstairs saying he would like to see L. G. again. I told him L. G. was still away, but I would see what could be arranged. Northcliffe said that Royce of the Rolls-Royce Company, who has been staying with him, was convinced that the Germans were refitting their Fleet with guns of heavier calibre and that the Admiralty should be warned. (This has already appeared in the papers.) N. also said that as he was speaking to me he could hear the guns booming in France. I told him they can be heard at Walton Heath.

L. G. came in to me on his return from his tour in South Wales and the West. He arrived about 10 p.m. He said he had had a successful time. He is going to France on Saturday. He seemed tired and did not tell me much that was new.

19TH.—From what Brade tells me, the differences between L. G. and the War Office are in train for amicable settlement. As yet the Munitions Department is in a state of chaos.

When at Pearson's Home for the Blind, I met Mrs.

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Ernest Moir.

<sup>2</sup> Civil Lord of the Admiralty, 1912-17. Now Lord Southborough.

<sup>3</sup> Lieut.-General Sir James Wolfe Murray; d. 1919.

Asquith for a few minutes, during which she informed us that she was suffering from a mysterious disease of the gums called pyorrhœa. This quite flabbergasted the blind soldiers, who had no idea that the human jaw was subject to such awful invasions.

Spent the day with the L.C.J. at Swinley and dined with him at Reading. Lord and Lady Murray and Lady Lewis and her daughter were there. Murray says Hobhouse<sup>1</sup> is very sore at having been ejected from the Cabinet.

The Chief is still assisting the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He says McKenna made a serious mistake last week in saying that the country had assumed financial obligations almost beyond its powers. On Friday I happened to meet McKenna and told him the same thing. He replied, "But it is true!" I said, "It may be, but you cannot always proclaim the truth, particularly when you want to borrow money. Only a saint would do that, and saints don't borrow. You talk of economy on the part of private individuals. The chief necessity is economy on the part of the Admiralty and War Office." McKenna agreed, and added, "That is why I said what I did." McKenna is good at figures. He spoke of Nicoll's article. He added, "Evidently the article was inspired by L. G. himself." I said, "The bandmaster cannot always produce the intended effect from the orchestra." The Chief thinks Nicoll's article most unfortunate and prejudicial to L. G.. Nicoll says he has received hundreds of letters and telegrams approving his action. The writers are mostly bishops and persons of that type, whose views are the true ones, so Nicoll says! He has been treating them with contempt all his life. His article this week is milk and water.

22ND.—Long talk with Kitchener. He was very friendly and communicative. In speaking of the Dardanelles I said I understood the campaign had ceased to be a naval operation and had become a military one. K. said, "Oh no! We shall not allow the Navy to escape in that way. They started the campaign, and now it has proved troublesome they will have to continue to bear their share of the blame and trouble. We

<sup>1</sup> Now the Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Hobhouse, Bart.; Postmaster-General, 1914-15.

were told that the *Queen Elizabeth* would settle the whole thing. It was stated that her guns would readily demolish all the Turkish forts. This has proved a fiasco. Now the Navy are talking of winning the campaign by means of monitors. I expect that project will fail in the same way as the *Queen Elizabeth* failed. She, by the way, has cleared off the scene of action altogether."

My impression of Kitchener was confirmed to-day. He knows little or nothing of the details of administration. He is not consulted by the officials and does not probe into their doings. On the other hand, he seems to have an instinct for the trend of the war. He understands the military situation and probabilities better than anyone else I have met. This is shown by what he said to-day regarding the Russian campaign. I saw him on Monday and am writing this on Saturday. Meanwhile the sagacity of his observations has been shown. As an administrator he is sadly disappointing. As an adviser he is sound. That is how I read him.

26TH.—L. G. told us that Jane Addams, the American philanthropist and writer, who has been interviewing leading statesmen in the belligerent countries, had called upon him. He told her that he was opposed to her peace proposals. She sent an account of her visits to the foreign statesmen to Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*, but he declined to publish it. L. G. gave a dramatic account of Jane Addams's interview with an Austrian Minister, a surly-looking person, who received her in such a stern and unyielding way that she said to him, "I suppose you think me mad?" "Mad?" he replied. "You are the only sane person I have seen for months. Hour after hour men come through that door demanding guns, ammunition, and men, until I have come to think that all the world is mad."

## Chapter XVI

*Northcliffe's gloomy prophecies—Difficulties between Kitchener and L. G.—The shells controversy grows acute—Asquith's optimism—The miners' strike—Fisher threatens to tell the facts.*

JULY 1ST, 1915.—I met Freddie Guest as I was leaving the House of Commons. We had some talk regarding French's action in publishing his statement regarding ammunition. I said, "French acted badly. He should have made the statement to the Prime Minister." Guest said he disagreed. *That course was discussed and rejected!* I said, "French should have told Asquith that he could not get what he wanted, and that unless this state of affairs was remedied he should resign and tell the nation his reason."

GUEST: How could a general retire in the face of the enemy? I was strongly against French going to Asquith. On a previous occasion he did something of the same sort and was nearly dismissed.

(Northcliffe said yesterday in discussing the same subject, "The disclosure in *The Times* was quite unpremeditated. There was no plan. It was all done on the spur of the moment.")

2ND.—Lunched with Northcliffe at *The Times* office. He rang me up yesterday to request me to urge economy in newspaper production. At lunch we had a long talk extending over two hours. He takes the gloomiest view of the situation and prophesies great disasters which will move the people to fury. He says that the Germans will endeavour to capture Calais, and read a note of an interview with Joffre, in which J. prophesied an early movement by the Germans in the direction of Calais, and explained why he would not agree to an extension of the British line in its natural direction, the inference being that he could not trust the British to hold this important section. In the Dardanelles Northcliffe prophesies the probable loss of the whole of the British Army. Generally speak-

ing, we are in an evil plight. Northcliffe, laughing, said that he would not trust his money to L. G.. He is too venturesome. N. described L. G. as a *simple* little man, who may easily be ruined by his enemies and rivals! I ventured to doubt his simplicity, but N. persisted in his opinion, so I did not trouble to argue further. N. wants to see L. G., and I have promised to endeavour to arrange a meeting for Sunday.

Last night there was a devil of a row in the House of Commons regarding Woolwich. I called to see Brade, who seemed worried. *He says Kitchener asked the P.M. what he should do. Asquith replied, "Leave things as they are!"* It seems there was a row in the Cabinet to-day in reference to Kitchener's failure to reply to a letter from L. G. on the subject of taking munition workers from the Army. When K. returned from the Cabinet he was much upset. Brade says that now things are not working smoothly between K. and L. G.. We discussed the situation at length. I urged Brade to see Kitchener and advise him to make an offensive and defensive alliance with L. G.. Brade agreed.

Saw L. G. at the Munitions Department. Told him privately what Brade had told me and what I had suggested. L. G. was much surprised that the P.M. should have given K. such advice. He appeared very thoughtful and remarked, "That is just like the old boy. It is most unfortunate." He went on to say, "That was a nasty attack in the House of Commons last night. The situation was very ugly. I was pleased that I turned the debate as I did. Had it continued, there would have been a general and widespread attack."

I forgot to write that Northcliffe in speaking of Arthur Balfour said, "I know Mr. Balfour well. He has been very kind to me." Then he laughed and added, "When he made me a peer, he put his arm round my waist and said, 'You are the youngest peer who has been created. I am very proud of you!'" I said, "A. J. B. must have a long arm!" which made N. laugh still more.

3RD.—L. G. called with Sir Percy Girouard to ask for the names of some suitable organisers. Subsequently I had a quiet talk with L. G.. He says McKenna denies shortage of high explosives, etc., and will probably lead him (L. G.) to state facts, as he will do if any of his colleagues, whoever it may be,

makes this statement in public. I said, to L. G., "You and Kitchener should combine. You would be impregnable and would render a great service to the country."

L. G.: Yes, I think you are right.

I arranged for L. G. to see Northcliffe to-morrow afternoon.

4TH.—L. G. asked me to lunch. We lunched alone and had a long talk. He spoke much concerning the denials of statements as to munitions shortage. L. G. says that Asquith will not face inconvenient facts. He hates to have his optimism shaken.

L. G. says that Winston is fully convinced that he (L. G.) devised and carried through the Coalition. Winston is angry and hurt, but full of admiration for L. G.'s Machiavellian cleverness!

L. G.: As a matter of fact I had no design whatever. I saw things had reached a stage when we could not carry on and that a Coalition was the best way out. Therefore I went to the P.M. and said so. He replied that he had been thinking the same thing for some time past.

L. G. says that we are exporting to France only 150,000 high-explosive shells per month, whereas the Army ask for 200,000 per day!

Northcliffe arrived at 3 o'clock and stayed for an hour and a half. L. G. talked very freely. N. called L. G.'s attention to an article in the *Westminster Gazette* saying that there was no shortage, etc.. L. G. repeated with violent emphasis that if any of his colleagues make this statement publicly, he will state the facts. Northcliffe said he wished to urge L. G. to make plain his own position as Chairman of the Munitions Committee, appointed in October, as people were freely saying that L. G. was equally responsible, if not more responsible than other Ministers, for any deficiencies of ammunition that may exist. N. very gloomy. He prophesied, as he did on Friday, that a great national disaster is impending, probably within a fortnight or three weeks, and that the present Ministry would be swept away. He expressed his anxiety that L. G. should survive the flood. L. G. rather avoided a direct answer to this suggestion. L. G. produced a War Office paper containing



particulars of ammunition ordered and supplied which seemed to show, from the figures he read, that during March, April, and May only about 50,000 high-explosive shells per month had been supplied, not only to the Army in France, but to that in the Dardanelles. L. G. said that only now are we ordering big guns, which cannot be delivered for ten months, and that there would have been a serious shortage of other weapons had it not been for the American order given in October owing to Kennedy's action.

L. G. spoke very strongly to me before Northcliffe came regarding the P.M.'s optimism. He said he wrote to the P.M. on the general situation in February or March and kept a copy of his letter, which he promises to show me. The letter concluded by saying that the war could not be won by fluffy optimistic speeches, or words to that effect. L. G. says that the War Office's case is that they ordered the shells, but the contractors let them down. Long talk with Brade, who says that he has been urging Von Donop to prepare his case, but that he will not see the necessity. Von Donop contends, so Kitchener says, that he (Von Donop) has saved us from the mistakes in manufacturing ammunition which have led to the bursting of a large number of French guns. He has declined to have ammunition manufactured by people who are not experts. I told Brade that the Marquis de Chasseloup Laubat had told me that the French had undoubtedly made mistakes, but that without such experimental errors it was impossible to make progress. We on our side had perhaps made fewer mistakes, but we had also made very little progress with the production of ammunition.

5TH.—The position in the South Wales coal trade is very serious. Hartshorn and Frank Hodges, two of the leaders, told me that a stoppage is imminent. At their request I saw Runciman<sup>1</sup> and arranged for him to see them privately at my house to-morrow. Runciman says the P.M. told him that Ministers devote too much time to settling Labour disputes, and that he was not to go to Cardiff to the Conference last week. Runciman then talked for nearly an hour regarding the war. He now takes a gloomy view of the situation and yesterday

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. Walter Runciman, President Board of Trade, 1914-16.

wrote to the P.M. saying that in his opinion it was most essential to consider the appointment of a new general in the place of Sir John French. Runciman thinks French is not an able or a strong man. The French people, with whom he comes in contact at the Board of Trade, hold a poor opinion of him. R. says that the P.M. and Bonar Law are going to France in a day or two. Runciman in his letter to the P.M. expressed the hope that he would carefully investigate the conditions and display the same firmness in dealing with the Commander in the Field as he had done in dealing with the recent political crisis. Runciman thought the letter might have been resented, but received a friendly non-committal reply. Runciman seems to think well of Kitchener as an adviser.

6TH.—Lunched with Winston Churchill at 21 Arlington Street. Also present Mrs. Churchill and Lloyd George. Main topic of discussion Haldane's speech of yesterday, in which he glorified and defended the War Office and alleged that the Cabinet Committee, consisting of Kitchener, L. G., McKenna, and Winston, were responsible for ordering the munitions and that the shortage was due to contractors' inability to execute orders owing to labour trouble. L. G. said that he would not sit down under these imputations and intended to make a public statement of the facts, which would show that the War Office was responsible for watching the contracts. Winston said he thought the matter should first be brought up in the Cabinet. L. G. replied that he knew this would mean that nothing would be done. L. G. said he was determined to make a public statement. Before L. G. arrived, Winston said that he considered Asquith had acted very wrongly in shedding Haldane owing to public clamour and that he should have been left in his position as Lord Chancellor.

L. G. and Winston talked of Fisher's appointment as Chairman of the Inventions Committee at the Admiralty. Winston said the P.M. had acted in an extraordinary way, having regard to what had taken place, in appointing Fisher without telling him (Winston). He was sure Fisher had had a nervous breakdown. He had declined to stay at the Admiralty, although he had been ordered to do so by the P.M. in the King's name. Fisher had destroyed the order, and the P.M. had described

him as a deserter. Winston said that Alfred Spender had come to him in a state of terrible alarm to tell him that Fisher had conducted himself in a most extraordinary fashion at an interview he had had with him, when he said, "I will get up in the House of Lords and tell the facts. I will not submit to this state of things any longer!" Winston added, "I do not bear the old boy any grudge and should have raised no objection to his appointment, but Asquith should have told me what was intended." Both L. G. and Winston condemned Asquith for his easy-going ways and refusal to face facts. They talked of Kitchener. They said that during the early part of the war K. treated his colleagues with disdain and refused all information. In this he was supported by Asquith, who would not insist upon questions being answered. Winston says he is now without occupation. He has started to paint in oils. He is a versatile creature.

When I arrived Winston was writing a letter to Violet Asquith congratulating her on her engagement to Bonham Carter, the P.M.'s secretary, who had told Winston that he had been in love with her for seven years. "Like Jacob!" remarked Mrs. Churchill. "And he has had to work quite as hard for the prize!"

8TH.—Northcliffe came to Walton and spent the afternoon with me. Still gloomy. Prophecies Asquith's downfall in six weeks. He says French has sealed his doom. Northcliffe says the Navy is short of high explosives. He left early to develop his attack on Haldane in to-morrow's *Daily Mail*. He says there is a conspiracy to accomplish L. G.'s downfall. He told me that before he left he gave instructions to the *Evening News* to attack Haldane, against whom the Northcliffe campaign commenced with a bitter leader in this morning's *Times*.

9TH.—L. G. called. I told him that the Labour Department at the Ministry of Munitions is in a state of muddle and that it will be impossible to adjudicate upon all the employers' objections to release their men. I suggested that the enrolments in each trade should be collected, that the Department should levy so many men from each trade and ask the trade associations to provide them. He thought this a good idea. He is furious with Haldane, and says that his speech is the public

evidence of a secret intrigue. L. G. intends to write to the P.M. protesting against these intrigues and saying he will not allow such a state of things to continue.

10TH.—McKenna tells me he is satisfied that nothing better could have been done in the past regarding munitions. Our condition is due to the fact that we were not prepared for war. Only an archangel could have been expected to display more foresight last October. McKenna says that the armament ring are quite free from any corrupt practices in this country.

Went to Swinley to see the L.C.J., with whom I had a long chat on the situation. He says he is anxious regarding L. G.. The Liberal Party are angry with him. They think he is conspiring with Northcliffe against the P.M.. The L.C.J. thinks Haldane should not have made the statements which have led to the controversy. He says Haldane is very bitter. He wrongly ascribes his downfall to L. G..

16TH.—I had tea with Arthur Balfour. In addition to what I have noted in my newspaper memorandum he talked of Kitchener. A. B. said K. did remarkably well at the Conference. He certainly dominated the whole proceedings. The Conference was a great success. I said, "K. is curiously unequal. On some days his observations are full of sagacity, brief and to the point, while on others he gives no idea of power or consecutive thought." A. B. entirely agreed, and added, "Sometimes he talks on and on and to no purpose. He is a curious study." I said, "Evidently he was at his best at the Conference."

A. B.: Yes, he shone there.

A. B. talked about his new book and said he was glad to have done with it. He thinks it better to publish it now, when there is a lull in the war, rather than in October, which seems to show that he anticipates a troublous autumn.

The coal strike in South Wales looks very serious. Hartshorn called to see me and gave me a note of the terms on which he thought the strike might be settled. These I took to Runciman at 10.30 p.m. and stayed with him until 11.30 p.m., discussing the details. The outlook does not seem hopeful. He was very nice, but rigid except upon one or two points.

18TH.—L. G. sent for me to discuss the coal strike. I suggested that certain points should be conceded, that the leaders should be told that the amended terms were final, and that in default martial law would be proclaimed in the coal-field. Later Nicholas,<sup>1</sup> the solicitor to the Miners' Federation, came to lunch with L. G. We had a long talk. N. agreed with my view. L. G. seemed of the same opinion. He said he thought the P.M. would have to see the miners' leaders again. The outlook seems black.

21ST.—The coal strike has been settled practically on the terms which Hartshorn and I drew up on Friday night and which I then submitted to Runciman and later to L. G. (on Sunday).

23RD.—Nice letter from Hartshorn.

24TH.—Dined with L. G.—also Dr. Macnamara. Long talk concerning the war. L. G. takes a gloomy view of our prospects of success. He thinks the nation is not taking the position seriously enough, and that a declaration should be made by the Government. He repeated that the P.M. will not face the facts. He hates to think things are in an unsatisfactory position. L. G. repeated that there is an intrigue to establish the idea that there is no shortage of munitions. He said, "I very nearly stated the facts. They would have astonished the public. If I am forced, I shall have to state them now. Should we have a national disaster, there will be an inquiry."

31ST.—Spent the afternoon and evening with L. G. and Llewellyn Williams at Walton Heath. Not much political talk. I congratulated L. G. on his wonderful speech to the colliers at the Opera House. He said he had very little time for preparation, and that he was surprised he had done so well. Winston had said to him that the speech was full of "lava." I said, "And splendid inspirations." L. G. remarked, "I wonder if people ever read speeches?" I said, "It all depends on the speech and the speaker. You might just as well inquire, 'Do people read books and newspapers?'"

L. G. gave me his reasons for parting with X.. L. G. says he is too erratic. K. told L. G. when he took him over that he would have to keep his finger tightly on the mouth of the

<sup>1</sup> Since deceased.

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bottle to ensure that the liquid would flow exactly in the direction intended. "That was a good description," said L. G..

We had a long discussion as to the qualities required for the head of a Munitions Department. I inquired if the Admiralty were going to spare Sir Frederick Black.<sup>1</sup> Just then a letter arrived from Arthur Balfour, offering to let L. G. have Black. L. G. was delighted with Balfour's letter, which he described as most friendly.

<sup>1</sup> As Director-General of Munitions Supply.

## Chapter XVII

*L. G. wants conscription—McKenna's opposition—Tory resignation threats—More trouble in the coal-fields.*

AUGUST 5TH, 1915.—Winston asked me to call to see him. I went to Wimborne House. He seemed depressed and down on his luck. He said the new Government is worse than the old one. The Tories are so glad to be in office again that they are like sucking doves. There is no effective opposition and no effective criticism. The House of Commons is muzzled, and the criticism in the Press is so badly done that it is ineffective here and most harmful abroad.

R.: It is certainly strange that in one of the greatest crises in history there should be no great outstanding figure in Opposition in Parliament.

WINSTON: Perfectly true. The spirit of the House of Commons is wrong. At a time like this there should be no holidays. The Government should not be criticised for the sake of criticising, but in a gigantic struggle of this sort the nation should have the opportunity of criticism and suggestion.

12TH AND 14TH.—Long chat with Arthur Balfour. He took me to the window of his room at the Admiralty, and, pointing to the Foreign Office, remarked, "Do you see that window? That is the window of the first room I occupied during my official life. I was more proud of it than I have been of any other room I have occupied during my career." I wondered what this had to do with the war and the Admiralty. I soon discovered. Taking my arm, he said, impressively, "A long life has taught me that, while we know and appreciate our own difficulties, we are apt to under-estimate those of our opponents. We have our troubles, and they are serious enough, but I am confident that the Germans have their troubles, and that they are probably more serious than ours."

I said, "You must have had an interesting and eventful life." "Yes," he replied, "I have. I have known most of the

Governmental and official secrets of the last forty years." I said, "Have you kept any notes?" "None," he replied. "I never made notes at the time, and unless conversations and incidents are recorded when they take place, the notes lose vitality." I told him that L. G. is delighted at his kindness in releasing Sir Frederick Black to go to the Munitions. Balfour was obviously pleased and remarked, "It was only my duty. He has such a Herculean task that every one of us should do all in his power to assist him. Was he pleased?" I said, "Yes, delighted." Balfour smiled in a far-away sort of manner and replied with obvious sincerity, "I am very glad."

L. G. and I had some talk on conscription, which he strongly favours. Donald is strongly opposed to the change. L. G. said that if he could get 120,000 skilled workers back from the Army he would then have all the men he wants, and that he can only secure the return of the 120,000 by means of conscription, which would enable K. to get additional men to replace them. L. G. is still very gloomy regarding the state of the war and prophesies its continuance for at least twelve months. I told him to-day that his new Department is still badly organised, and strongly urged him to appoint an executive committee under the presidency of Black or some other suitable person. There is no homogeneity amongst his officials. He admitted the defect, and said that he meant to appoint a committee.

20TH.—L. G., who has had a bad chill, went with me to Folkestone for the week-end. We motored down. He told me that McKenna was opposed to his proposal to order more big guns, on the ground of expense and because he alleged that naval requirements would be prejudiced. L. G. inquired of the P.M. whether he was to proceed with his orders or not. The P.M. said he had better go on. McKenna is strongly opposed to conscription in any form. L. G., who strongly favours it, said that before it was raised in the Cabinet the facts should be ascertained, and that it was very important to secure Kitchener's support. If he declares in favour of conscription, opposition would be almost impossible; whereas if he declares against it, the supporters of the policy would have a hard task before them. It was agreed that F. E. Smith should see the



Conservative leaders and arrange that they should not raise the question until a Cabinet Committee had reported on the facts, and that F. E. should also see Kitchener. F. E. wrote that he had seen Bonar Law and had arranged for the discussion to be deferred and that K. thought it wiser to wait the result of the National Register. A Cabinet Committee has been appointed to investigate the facts regarding recruiting. L. G. arranged that there should be read to the Committee the record of the proceedings at the Defence Committee when L. G. proposed to order rifles from U.S.A.. He said these Minutes made a great impression. He takes a gloomy view of the situation and said that the late Government displayed great incompetence and neglect of duty. He again referred to his letters and memoranda upon the war written in February last and telephoned to Davies, his secretary, to bring them to Folkestone. He is strongly of opinion that some form of conscription is necessary. In February he proposed that quotas should be called for from each county. The P.M. is treating the war as if it were Home Rule or Welsh Disestablishment. He does not recognise that the nation is fighting for its life. When a subject is forced on his attention his judgment is admirable, but he never searches out weak places. Every Minister is left alone until some huge rock looms ahead and action is inevitable. I said, "Has the war aged the P.M. much?" He said, "No." We talked of political friendships and antagonisms. L. G. said that Lord Rendel had told him, almost at the outset of his (L. G.'s) political career, that when he got into office he would find there were no real friendships at the top. L. G. found that this cynical remark was quite true. Look, for example, at Haldane's downfall. His close friendship with the P.M. had not saved him. I (G. A. R.) quoted Disraeli's epigram, "There is no honour in politics." L. G. said that this was a cynical, sweeping observation, but feared it was near the truth. He said that in the Cabinet no important questions were decided by vote. The P.M. usually declared that the general opinion seemed to be so and so. The deliberations of the Cabinet are conducted in an orderly way. Balfour, Curzon, and Carson put their points very well. Bonar Law is not bad. Winston is very unequal.

SUNDAY, 22ND.—L. G. and I motored to Margate to visit Bonar Law. Winston and F. E. Smith were there. They had a long conference at which I was not present. L. G. very gloomy. He says the news regarding Bulgaria is very bad. They are likely to go in against Serbia. Bonar Law looked very serious and anxious. Winston had written a long memorandum regarding the Gallipoli operations for circulation amongst the Cabinet. He gave this to L. G., and gave me strict injunctions to see that he sent it to London in the morning. L. G. told me this morning that there is to be a big offensive in the West and that he had to scrape up all the ammunition he could find. He bitterly complained that the P.M. had delayed informing him of the fact for two precious days. The letter reached him only last night. The Munitions Department take over Woolwich Arsenal to-morrow. The L.C.J., who has been in France, spent the night with me. We had to wait for him at Dover for some hours. He is probably going to the United States on Thursday accompanied by Sir Edward Holden<sup>1</sup> and others to endeavour to arrange American financial questions.

23RD.—We motored to Woolwich Arsenal, where L. G. had a long conference with Sir Frederick Black, Mr. Eric Geddes, Dr. Addison,<sup>2</sup> and Sir Frederick Donaldson.<sup>3</sup> L. G. assumed his huge responsibilities with a light heart.

26TH.—Brade says that K. has an enlistment scheme up his sleeve which he meant to produce later, but now his hand has been forced and he will have to declare himself. He also says that Bonar Law, Curzon, Austen Chamberlain, Walter Long, and Carson will resign if necessary on the question of National Service.

27TH.—Dined with Frederick Guest. Present—Henry Dalziel,<sup>4</sup> H. A. Gwynne of the *Morning Post*, A. P. Nicholson of the *Daily News*, Josiah Wedgwood, M.P., George Cave, M.P.,<sup>5</sup> Robert Harcourt, M.P., Ivor Herbert, M.P.

<sup>1</sup> Chairman London City & Midland Bank; d. 1919.

<sup>2</sup> Parliamentary Secretary Ministry of Munitions, 1915-16; Minister of Munitions, 1916-17.

<sup>3</sup> Technical Adviser Ministry of Munitions; d. 1916.

<sup>4</sup> Later Lord Dalziel, newspaper proprietor.

<sup>5</sup> Later Viscount Cave, Solicitor-General, 1915-16; d. 1928.

Guest says he has returned temporarily to endeavour to carry through National Service. He denies that he is working with Northcliffe. He has given a series of dinners of the same kind with a view to stimulating action. After dinner he read out a very clever memorandum and proposed that it should be signed by a number of Liberal Members of Parliament and circulated to the remainder of the Liberal Members. I suggested that this would be dangerous. If made public the memorandum might do the nation much injury. Ultimately they determined upon a deputation to the P.M..

28TH.—Guest played golf with me yesterday. Very anxious for L. G. to see his memorandum.

Had Hartshorn and Barker, the miners' leaders, to dinner to discuss settlement of threatened strike. Position very gloomy.

29TH.—Lunched with L. G. at Walton. Long talk over mining dispute. L. G. says the P.M. will have to assume responsibility, as in default of a settlement there will be a row. I consequently spoke to the leaders and explained the position.

Long talk with L. G. on the military position, conscription, etc.. He says that Bonar Law, Curzon, and others are sure to resign unless something is done. Bonar Law will go, because if he stays and Curzon goes, the latter will certainly become leader of the Conservative Party. L. G. says further that the P.M. will probably try a compromise by accepting some form of national service.

L. G. read Guest's memorandum, written, I think, by Philip Kerr<sup>1</sup> of the *Round Table*, who I am told is a very clever fellow. L. G. was much impressed by the memorandum, but described it as a dangerous document for publication. He was much interested as to the amount of support available for National Service amongst Liberal Members. I said, "Guest mentioned forty-five."

L. G.: That would do it.

SEPTEMBER 1ST, 1915.—Ellis Griffith,<sup>2</sup> who is to speak at the Demonstration at the Queen's Hall to-morrow in favour

<sup>1</sup> Now Marquess of Lothian; Secretary to Mr. Lloyd George, 1916–21.

<sup>2</sup> Later the Rt. Hon. Sir Ellis Griffith, Bart., K.C., Under-Secretary Home Office, 1912–15; d. 1926.

of compulsory service, came to consult me regarding his speech. I strongly advised him to abandon the idea of universal service, industrial and military, and to confine himself to the latter. With this he agreed. I also advised him to urge the necessity for more careful selection in recruiting, so as to avoid the depletion of the manufacturing and export industries.

4TH.—Long talk with Captain F. Guest, who tells me that Winston is preparing the Report of the Crewe Committee and that they will report strongly in favour of compulsory service.

Played golf with L. G. and Donald. L. G. very strong on necessity for conscription, but said that arrangements must be carried out by civilians. He told Donald that he was taking up the wrong line and would have to eat his words. At night I dined with L. G.. Sir George McCrae<sup>1</sup> of Edinburgh, now a colonel, was there. He talked a great deal of his Parliamentary experience. L. G. enjoyed a recital of some of his own witticisms, e.g. McCrae, when attending a Treasury Committee presided over by L. G., remarked that Alexander Ure,<sup>2</sup> the Lord-Advocate, had made a certain statement. L. G. expressed surprise and added, "I am afraid that perhaps Mr. Balfour was right after all" (Mr. B. had called Ure a liar on one celebrated occasion). L. G. laughed heartily and said, "That was very naughty of me."

L. G. described his own feelings when he first addressed the House of Commons. He said, "The sense of nervousness was horrible. My mouth felt as if it was full of coke."

He told two good stories of Michael Hicks Beach—"Black Michael." Sir William Harcourt and Michael Hicks Beach used to conspire that Harcourt should make a violent attack upon him, charging him with holding opinions regarding Tariff Reform which he knew perfectly well he did not hold. Hicks Beach would then seize the opportunity violently to repudiate the allegations and thus annoy Chamberlain. The other story related to Sidney Gedge, the solicitor, a great Churchman. On one occasion the clerical party desired to

<sup>1</sup> Treasurer of Edinburgh, M.P. East Edinburgh, 1899-1909; Stirling and Falkirk, 1923-4; d. 1928.

<sup>2</sup> Later Lord Strathclyde; d. 1928.

tackle Hicks Beach on some subject, but, owing to his known roughness of demeanour, were in considerable doubt as to the methods to be adopted. Gedge vaingloriously offered to interview Hicks Beach. He came out of H. B.'s room as white as a sheet saying, "I was never so insulted in my life. He called me 'a damned canting attorney'!"

29TH.—Brade, Sir William Lever, and Sir Howard Frank to dinner. Brade says K. is busily considering various schemes for compulsory service; the War Office believe it will be impossible to obtain the men required by voluntary effort. He believes that K. favours the quota system. He told me an amusing little story. A committee has recently been sitting in regard to Army chaplains; the committee consisted of Brade and several bishops. Their report was presented to Kitchener last week. He sent for Brade and, holding the report in his hand, remarked fiercely, "The committee had no right to introduce the question of vestments into their report." Brade was mystified and replied, "It contains nothing about vestments." "Yes," said K., "it does. It says, 'The committee cannot cope with, etc.' What is 'cope' but a vestment?" He was hugely pleased with his pun and laughed heartily with much satisfaction. Wolfe Murray, President of the Army Council, is to be replaced by Sir Archibald Murray.

## Chapter XVIII

*Compulsory service plans—L. G. discusses resignation—His letters to Asquith—A talk with Lord Derby—Growing opposition to Kitchener.*

OCTOBER 2ND, 1915.—Drove to Walton with L. G.. He takes a gloomy view of the offensive in the West and does not believe that the Allies will achieve their object. He says the casualties have been enormous—ours amount to some 80,000 already. He believes that the Bulgarians are certain to side with Germany, and repeated that the negotiations have been badly managed. I inquired whether he thought K. had decided upon some form of national service. He gave no direct reply, but said that whatever K.'s own views might be, he was certain to stick closely to the P.M., whom he regards, and perhaps rightly, as his only friend in the Cabinet. L. G. is of opinion that the trade-union recruiting campaign will be a failure, as no recruits can be drawn from colliers, engineers, railway men, etc.. The classes who can be spared and who have recruited badly are not trade unionists. L. G. says K. is quite incapable of dealing with his huge responsibilities. L. G. spoke highly of Carson, but thinks Bonar Law weak. He says that the intrigue against him (L. G.) has broken down, as he knew it would.

We talked of the loneliness of political life. L. G. again repeated Lord Rendel's remark when L. G. first took office, "There are no real friendships at the top." "This is a cynical, but true, observation," said L. G.. I said, "Every man has to fight his own battle." "Yes," replied L. G., "and so long as his sword is bright and keen he will maintain his position. It all depends on that. Some of my friends thought that because the Radical Party were disgruntled with me I was in a dangerous situation. But I know the House of Commons. It is a most unreliable barometer of public feeling. Lobby prophecies can never be relied upon; I have experienced this on many occasions. The Radical Party do not control public opinion; the

people form their own view. If they are of opinion that in a crisis like this I am useful—I won't say indispensable—to the nation, as a man who thinks things out and points the way, they will stand by me, and no threats by the Radical Party and no intrigues against me in the Cabinet can injure me."

OCTOBER 1915.—Dined with L. G. at Walton. He has not been well, but is better to-day. He spoke most anxiously of the situation. He says we are making straight for disaster. The situation in the Balkans is most serious. The negotiations have been muddled and the War Office have no plan of action. L. G. saw the P.M. to-day, and remonstrated, but without effect. L. G. added, "And so I left the room. I could not stand it any longer." L. G. says the P.M. is hopeless and that the management of affairs is characterised by general ineptitude. "I think it will be necessary," he continued, "for six or seven of us to resign and tell the country the truth. For a time we should be unpopular. We should be told that we were shaking the confidence of the nation and of our Allies, and we should be charged with acting from selfish motives, but later on the public would recognise that we had done the right thing."

R.: How would such a plan work out? It would of course at once form two great Parliamentary parties: the adherents of the Government, and the critics. But what would follow?

L. G.: Disaster is certain, and whoever is in charge will get the blame. We may later on retrieve the position, but I don't see how we can avoid disaster. The position in Gallipoli is tragic.

R.: What is the Government's plan?

L. G.: It seems inconceivable, but they have no plan. In the West I have supplied all the munitions required, but the result of the offensive has been negligible and the loss of life enormous. Of Russia Stephen Graham gives me a most gloomy report. The Germans may have made a mistake in pushing so far forward, but they have accomplished great things on the Eastern Front. Some of my colleagues reassure themselves by saying the Germans are becoming exhausted. What evidence is there of that? If enlistment in Germany and Austria has been equal to that in France, the Germans and Austrians must still have considerable reserves, but more important is the fact

that their union with Turkey and Bulgaria will add at least two million more men to their fighting forces. The enemy will be through Serbia in a month.

R.: Why do the Allies refrain from taking steps to compel Greece to perform her treaty with Serbia?

This idea seemed to find favour with L. G., who concluded, "Well, if I don't resign, I shall have to make a speech giving the country a little insight into the true condition of affairs."

WEEK ENDING OCTOBER 9TH, 1915.—Several talks with various people about recruiting.

I understand that K. has drawn up a memorandum, embodying his views. Shortly, the proposals are said to be:

1. Place recruiting in the hands of municipalities.
2. War Office to fix weekly quota for each district, based on National Register and eliminating from the computation all trades which cannot be further depleted.
3. If men cannot be obtained voluntarily, recourse to be had to ballot resembling the old-fashioned militia ballot.

15TH.—Ashmead Bartlett, correspondent of the London papers at the Dardanelles, has been sent home by Ian Hamilton, who charges him with serious breaches of the military regulations. The General's decision was first communicated to the War Office by cablegram. I asked for more particulars. Later I was informed that the breach consisted in Ashmead Bartlett having written a private letter to the Prime Minister, which he sent secretly by the hand of an Australian correspondent, one Murdoch, who was coming to England. According to Bartlett, no one but Murdoch and himself knew of the letter, but apparently he was wrong, as Murdoch was stopped and searched *en route* for an unauthorised dispatch. The letter was taken from him and forwarded to the War Office unopened. Brade told me that the Prime Minister heard that a letter had arrived for him at the War Office and sent for it. The letter was opened and Brade was informed of the contents. This was four or five days ago. On Wednesday, October 13th, Ashmead Bartlett attended the Council Meeting of the Newspaper Proprietors' Association and told his story. Harry Lawson also had a letter which he had received from Ian



Hamilton, giving his reasons for sending Bartlett home—a very sketchy sort of a letter. It was arranged that Lawson should see the Prime Minister on the subject and ascertain his views. To-day Lawson told me that the P.M. had never heard of the letter. I then telephoned to Brade, who informed me that the letter had been lost at Downing Street. I understand it contained important information and serious reflections upon the conduct of the campaign. Lawson says Ian Hamilton is to be recalled.

16TH.—Dined with L. G., who says K. has come down definitely on the side of compulsory service. He is very firm and says he will resign unless his scheme is accepted. The P.M. is, however, obdurate and appears to be influenced by McKenna. L. G. says Carson is sick to death of the eternal talk and policy of drift. He added, "The P.M. is a great man, but his methods are not suited to war." L. G. thinks anyone who accepts the Premiership now will be a bold man. He will probably have to face months of disaster, which he will not have the means of avoiding.

L. G. again referred to the letter which he wrote to the P.M. in December, warning him that the Cabinet must grip the war and that optimistic fluff would not enable the nation to weather the impending hurricane. He also said that he had written some time ago warning the P.M. of the coming dangers in the East, but his warning had been disregarded. Arthur Balfour's attitude is not satisfactory. He will not face facts, and talks in generalities of German exhaustion, which must terminate the war in favour of the Allies. L. G. says the Russians are in a bad way and the Germans are now preparing for a campaign in Persia. He regrets that he did not resign some months ago and tell the nation the true state of affairs. He thinks that the Members of the Cabinet who are in favour of compulsion should say to those who are against it (Asquith, McKenna, Simon, Runciman, and Co.), "You are of opinion that the war can be successfully carried on without compulsion, while we think it cannot. Under those circumstances we will resign and leave you to prosecute the war in your own way."

19TH.—Went to Strachey's<sup>1</sup> (editor of the *Spectator*) to

<sup>1</sup> John St. Loe Strachey; d. 1927.

meet Lord Derby, with whom I spent two hours discussing his new recruiting scheme. He seems able and energetic. Very practical and clear. He also seems very cute. He wanted to know how to interest the Press. I told him the newspapers would be enthusiastic without any stimulus beyond the King's Appeal and his own letter. I suggested, however, that he should write a personal letter to editors, which he said he would do.

The Stanleys are a wonderful family. For 600 years they have been in the forefront of English public life. As Lord Derby stood there before the fire, making his points with great emphasis, I pictured his ancestors, clad in armour, laying down the law.

21ST.—Called on Northcliffe by appointment; found him still full of prophecies and criticism. I have not seen him for about three months. He is a keen observer, and said many shrewd things. He still considers the Government most incompetent. The management of the Gallipoli campaign has been scandalous; the Balkan negotiations have been muddled, and there is no proper military plan; the defence of London has been neglected and mismanaged; the condition of affairs in Russia is most serious, and in France the recent offensive has been the most costly victory ever secured by British arms. I inquired what course N. thought things would take. He replied, "This Government will be out in three months. It will be succeeded by a Committee of Safety, comprising perhaps five leading men. Later they will probably be turned out, and then there will be a revolution. Another thing that may happen is a public exposure of the state of affairs in my newspapers. No doubt they may prosecute me, but I shall not mind if they do. When the true story of the Gallipoli campaign is published, the public will be aghast. Carson will probably state the case. He is an able man. He was against me in the soap libel.<sup>1</sup> He has the material for a very strong speech, and I think he will make it. He is a stout-hearted fellow."

I said, as I was leaving, "Have you any message for L. G.?"

N. replied, "No. I was talking to him on the telephone last night, but you can tell him he will be one of the five and

<sup>1</sup> In which the late Lord Leverhulme successfully sued the *Daily Mail* for having denounced a trade agreement as a "soap trust."

that he will find Carson a stout-hearted companion." I said, "Will L. G. be reassured if I tell him he is to be one of a committee of five who will most probably precede a revolution? The prospect for the five does not seem very hopeful!" N. laughed and said, "We must go by stages, and hope for the best."

This week I had an interesting interview with Llewellyn Williams, K.C.,<sup>1</sup> and old friend of L. G.'s. He takes the view which usually obtains in Liberal circles. We are doing as well as can be expected; a united Cabinet is essential to success; L. G. and Co. are unduly pessimistic, and are doing harm by agitating against existing conditions; any form of compulsory service will rend the country in twain. Williams wrote me a long letter after the interview.

23RD.—Lunched and played golf with L. G., who is evidently very worried. He is suffering from neuralgia and is to receive a visit from the dentist to-night. But apart from this he finds the general situation most depressing. He is perplexed as to the course he should take. He is convinced that unless our methods are changed we shall have a great disaster in the East, and that we shall ultimately be beaten in the war. He thinks the nation should be told the truth, but knows that that cannot be done without disclosing information which it would be better not to make public. He is evidently pondering alternative courses of action; he does not know how to act. I told him of my conversation with Northcliffe.

L. G.: The reorganisation of the Cabinet is what is wanted; we are sure to be beaten under our present regime. One course I have thought of would be to resign my seat in the Cabinet and continue my work at the Munitions Department. I should thus escape this horrible responsibility for things I cannot alter. I could make a speech showing the nation I had resigned for good reasons. I might ask for the appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Commons to whom the facts and documents—they are mostly documents—could be submitted in secret. This Committee could report to the House.

R.: Resignation and the retention of a subsidiary appointment under the Cabinet would be a mistake.

<sup>1</sup> Recorder of Cardiff; d. 1922.

L. G.: But it would not be subsidiary!

R.: Is not any appointment subsidiary to the Cabinet?

L. G. did not answer the question. I said, "There is another course. You might make a speech dealing with the recent attacks upon you and explaining the real point at issue, viz. the necessity for better organisation."

L. G.: I have warned the public already. Take, for example, the preface which I wrote to my recently published speeches. Even Robertson Nicoll thought I had gone too far. Then I wrote a letter to the usual correspondent.

R.: This is a vital and important matter. The public will require that it should be treated in a dignified way in accordance with precedent and tradition. Stray papers, and letters to Harrisonian correspondents, do not fill the bill. Then again you have never made any definite charges or suggestions. Whether you could allege mismanagement and remain in the Cabinet, I don't know.

L. G.: It would be difficult to allege mismanagement. Those of us who hold my views offered to the P.M. that we would resign and leave him to carry on with the Members of the Cabinet who hold his point of view. But he would not acquiesce.

As I left L. G. I said, "Perhaps it might be well to wait a little before deciding how to act. I don't think much of two of your plans: (1) resignation from the Cabinet and retention of Munitions; or (2) motion for Select Secret Committee of the House of Commons."

L. G. laughed, and saying "There may be something to be said for a 'wait and see' policy," pulled the shawl over his aching head and composed himself for a nap.

I have omitted an important observation he made. He said, "The public will have to come into this. I see no other way of improving matters. I do not want to be in the Cabinet just now. There is going to be a disaster; I have done my best to prevent it. My advice has not been taken. I don't wish to feel that I am responsible for what I cannot avoid."

29TH.—L. G., Lord Reading, and Robertson Nicoll to lunch. We had a long talk extending from 1.30 to 4 p.m. Lord R. is to spend the week-end with the P.M., who evidently

wishes to consult him upon the political situation. L. G. saw the P.M. this morning and is to see him again later in the day. L. G. says the whole Cabinet consider K. incompetent, but the P.M. cannot make up his mind to act. Last night L. G., Grey, and Crewe had dinner with the P.M. and all told him their views of K.. L. G. says K. is useful in Council and sometimes speaks quite well. He is also on occasion a good critic. His weakness is that he is a bad organiser. The Army Council has ceased to exist for effective purposes. There is no plan of action and no foresight. A damning indictment could be made, but the difficulty is that you cannot state many of the facts in public. In regard to munitions: first, the necessary guns were not ordered until L. G. raised the question; second, shells were not ordered until very late in the day; third, when they were ordered the War Office omitted to order all the necessary parts, so that when L. G. took on Woolwich, he found stacks of shells which could not be completed for lack of filling material, etc.; fourth, the P.M., K., and Winston were the only people who knew the facts regarding the inception of the Dardanelles expedition; fifth, the Dardanelles expedition was mismanaged. Ian Hamilton was not even allowed to have the generals he desired, but was compelled to accept two men chosen for him.

Lord R. said he hoped L. G. would not resign, as this would be a national calamity. In any event he must base his case on some specific issue. Nicoll thought he should resign. L. G. said he agreed. I said the specific issue was the military conduct of the war, but that the P.M. would no doubt institute reforms rather than that L. G. should resign. L. G. said that he had not yet threatened resignation. If he resigns he would rather do so alone. Resignation in company with a group of Tory Ministers would lay his action open to misconstruction. He will have to determine how to act before Tuesday, when the P.M. makes his statement. Nicoll said that unless L. G. resigns he will be responsible for the mismanagement of affairs. Lord R. responded, "He cannot escape responsibility for the past, and it would be a calamity that the nation should be deprived of the services of the only man in the Cabinet with driving force, foresight, and initiative." L. G. referred to the

written warnings and protests which he had addressed to the P.M., but admitted that he could not hope to escape responsibility for what had occurred. He repeated his diagnosis of the situation which I have related in my notes of earlier conversations, and said he thought the nation should be told the truth. The existing Parliamentary Opposition was negligible, but if he were to resign, he and Carson would form the nucleus of a strong critical party. L. G. repeated what he had told me before, viz. that Lord Morley had said that Asquith would have made a great judge, but was not a man of action. Lord R. dissented, and said that Mr. A. would have made a great judge, but was something more. I said, "He would have made a great ambassador—he combines the qualities required for both vocations." L. G. told us that no one gives better advice than Mr. A.. If L. G. is in doubt about a matter he will often ask the P.M. for his opinion, which is always sound and helpful. "You come away," said L. G., "feeling that you have got help and guidance." L. G. bitterly complained of the attitude of the Liberal papers, which he said was due to some of his critics. In the early days of the Munitions Department they had gone about saying it was in a state of chaos and was being seriously mismanaged. L. G. said of course it was chaotic. How could it be anything else? How could you hope to start a big undertaking without a preliminary period of chaos? "I started," said he, "with a chair and a table in a carpetless room with no staff. The whole fabric had to be created."

I had tea at the Home Office with Sir John Simon. We had a long talk regarding the Censorship arrangements, when he outlined certain new proposals.

1. That disobedience to a Press Bureau notice would *ipso facto* constitute an offence under the Defence of the Realm Act.
2. That a committee should be formed to manage the Bureau, consisting of representatives of the various Government Departments with an Under-Secretary as Chairman.
3. That the Government should have power to punish disobedience by suspension of offending newspaper.

He seemed to think No. 1 would meet with the approval of a large section of the Press. I assured him he was mistaken.

The Press might quarrel amongst themselves, but they would all join in opposing any attempt to impose restraints or punishments. I also advised him to employ more trained sub-editors at the Bureau and to strengthen the Admiralty War Office and Press Committee instead of creating a new body. I said the Committee should meet frequently and regularly and should have a secretary who would keep in touch with the various Departments. He promised to consider what I had proposed. I think, however, that he meditates immediate action and I therefore communicated my suspicions to the most prominent members of the N.P.A.]

Lord Derby asked me to call to see him. He told me that this week's *Nation* contained an erroneous statement that he was getting all the recruits he required, and that this inaccurate statement, if repeated in other papers, would probably do his movement serious injury. I advised him to issue a contradiction through the Press Bureau, coupled with a statement that no estimate of the success of his scheme can yet be formed. He agreed to do this, and we drafted a memorandum. Lord D. said he must keep faith with the married men, who were enlisting more freely than the young unmarried men. The married must not be called out unless the unmarried had enlisted in reasonable numbers. He hoped the P.M. would make this plain in his speech on Tuesday. (Lord D. had already written me to that effect.) We talked of the military situation, which Lord D. regards as very serious. He said that no man ever described his own character in a phrase better than Asquith—"Wait and see." I said, "Mr. A. has wonderful judgment and great dexterity in a political crisis." Lord D. agreed. I said, "The whole situation revolves round Asquith and Kitchener—and particularly the latter." Lord Derby replied, "K.'s administration has been a complete muddle." We talked of L. G.. Lord D. said, "He is a great man, but loses himself when he gets on his legs and says things which come home to roost in an unfortunate way."

Lord D. considers it an amazing sign of weakness that at such a time the Cabinet, feeling as they do, should not have the courage to reform the military administration. They are frightened of the people who do not know the facts.

## Chapter XIX

*Censorship alterations—L. G. resigns, but gets his own way—  
Kitchener's mission to the East—The Liberal split widens—  
A talk with Carson.*

NOVEMBER 4TH, 1915.—Called to see L. G. at 6 Whitehall Gardens, but found him engaged. Coming out of his room, however, I met Northcliffe, who eagerly inquired if I knew who the Cabinet Committee were to be. He said he had not asked L. G., as he (N.) had a Frenchman with him. Later Winston arrived looking very gloomy. He said that things appeared to be very bad. He also said he was tired of his present mode of life, and could not stand it much longer—"Painting pictures," he added pathetically. He said he should go off to the war.

— A long interview at the House of Commons with the Home Secretary regarding the Censorship. I handed him a resolution passed on Wednesday at the Newspaper Conference, submitting that no change should be made without previous discussion with the newspapers. This seemed to surprise him. He told me he was going to France for the Cabinet to inquire into the Censorship arrangements. I offered to send him my recent correspondence with the War Office. He gladly accepted this proposal.

5TH.—Talked with the P.M.'s secretary regarding alterations in Censorship. I repeated what I had said to the Home Secretary. From what the secretary told me, the subject has evidently been much discussed. Graham Greene, Secretary of the Admiralty, sent for me and referred to the same question. I told him that the real defect in the system was the method of censoring military information. The Press Officers at G.H.Q. are considered unduly restrictive and the military censors at the Bureau do not know their business. The remedy was to alter the policy at G.H.Q. and to employ more sub-editors at the Bureau.

7TH.—Dined with L. G.. His hair looks much darker than



it did. I charged him with dyeing it. He said, "It is strange that you should think that; my wife has just been telling me that I am less grey than I was. I really do believe that my hair does change colour in accordance with my physical condition. I am feeling much better than I was." Mrs. Lloyd George confirmed this theory and added that when L. G. was reading for his "final," a small white patch appeared in his hair, and gradually went away. We talked of L. G.'s throat trouble some years ago. Mrs. L. G. said, "He really was ill then, but in imagination he has had almost every illness under the sun." L. G. laughingly admitted the impeachment. The conversation then turned on public affairs.

R.: I gather that you have got your own way. You have had a great success. A piece of dexterous work.

L. G.: Yes, it has been a big week.

R.: Did the P.M. show much fight?

L. G.: Yes and no. I saw he was moving, and so *I handed him my resignation last Sunday*. I took a big risk. I might have been outside the Cabinet. However, it turned out all right. Bonar Law would have resigned with me. He was here last Sunday. I had someone down to write my letter and sent it by my messenger. Now the old P.M. and I have resumed our former relationship. I think from custom the old boy is glad; he had been accustomed to act with me for so long that he would have missed me.

R.: I gather that the Defence Committee is to consist of yourself, the P.M., Arthur Balfour, and Grey.

L. G.: Grey is only to attend for certain purposes, and then there are the two generals—Sir Archibald Murray and General Callwell.

R.: I suppose Kitchener will not return to the War Office. (Yesterday it was announced that he had gone to the East to advise the Government.)

L. G.: No. I am relieved that he has gone. The whole tone of the War Office has changed for the better. Everyone was afraid of him. We could get nothing done.

R.: Who is going to the War Office?

L. G.: I think the old P.M. will stay there for the present. He rather likes the job.

R.: It is remarkable that this war—the greatest event in history since Napoleon's wars—has not produced one great Parliamentary speech in Opposition.

L. G.: Yes, that is a remarkable fact. But of course all the Parliamentary leaders are in the Cabinet. Bonar Law made a great mistake to accept office. In the Cabinet he is overshadowed by Balfour, Curzon, and even Lansdowne. The two latter have more knowledge of affairs than he has, and of course Balfour is a remarkable person. Had Bonar Law declined office, he could have criticised the Government, including his competitors, and no charge of pique could have been brought against him, as he could have said with truth that he had been offered and had declined office. He could have started with mild criticisms and, as the situation developed, he could have made such a case that he could easily have smashed the Government.

R.: Perhaps he realises the position now.

L. G.: I know he does, for I told him on Sunday. (Then pointing to a picture of Napoleon) I wish we had him with us now.

R.: The position would have been very different. I wonder how Mr. Gladstone would have done (pointing to his picture) if he had been at the head of affairs.

L. G.: It is difficult to say. He would have displayed wonderful energy, but you cannot tell whether he would have been a great War Minister. The qualities required are difficult to diagnose. Chatham was a great War Minister—a man of consummate eloquence and commanding personality. But Castlereagh, another great War Minister, was quite different. He could not speak and had no qualities which strike the imagination.

R.: It is a question of judgment, the power of selecting men, and energy.

L. G.: I agree. The capacity for judging men is most important. That is where we are at a loss. We do not know the Army.

R.: Nor does K. know the modern army. He does not know the younger men.

L. G.: Quite true. We cannot always rely upon the opinion

of the generals. There is a certain amount of professional jealousy or professional friendship involved. Human nature is the same in the Army as elsewhere.

R.: To revert to Parliamentary oratory. Did you read Cromer's<sup>1</sup> speech on the situation, which I thought admirable in style and matter—the best that has been delivered during the war?

L. G.: I thought the same. It was excellent. Most of our critics say too much. They should follow Cromer's example and state their case with moderation and without bitterness or invective.

R.: Have you heard of the proposals regarding Censorship?

L. G.: Yes. Curzon and I are fighting them in the Cabinet. Simon and Buckmaster don't like our opposition.

R.: Rufus Isaacs has been very useful in this crisis. The P.M. attaches the first importance to his opinion.

L. G.: Yes. He has been very valuable. It is a pity he is not in the Cabinet; he would be invaluable at a time like this.

R.: Well, I must go. It is ten o'clock. My time.

L. G.: We have had a good talk. That was a useful chat we had with Rufus and Nicoll at your house on Friday week. It helped me a great deal in my interviews with the P.M.; it gave me a line. Perhaps, however, I should have insisted on resigning.

R.: You did the right thing. Resignation would have been a mistake. You are more effective in the Government than you would be outside. You have had your way; you are getting things put right. You may have sacrificed yourself, but you have done the best thing for your country.

L. G.: That is the only thing that matters. I am content, and happier than I have been for months.

GRH.—It is evident that L. G. is gradually shedding the Radical Party. None of the Radicals in the Cabinet is working with him. McKenna, Simon, Runciman, McKinnon Wood, Buckmaster, Harcourt, etc., are opposed to him. He finds his supporters amongst the Conservatives. It looks as if he is going the same road as Chamberlain. L. G.'s attitude to the war

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Cromer; d. 1917.

makes his severance from the Radicals inevitable. The force of circumstances is leading him into the same position as that in which Chamberlain found himself. Bereft of his associates on the great question of the day, he is obliged to seek support elsewhere. L. G.'s future is interesting.

11TH.—Brade lunched with me. He says K. made no special remark when he left the War Office; he just said good-bye and that he would be back in about three weeks or a month. "And," added B., "I believe he means to come back. If he achieves a great success in the East and decides to return to the W.O., they will have a lot of trouble to turn him out." The situation is interesting. I wonder what Mr. A. said to K. and how the former regards the possibility of K. resuming his functions at the W.O.. I suppose Mr. A. is waiting and seeing and hoping for the best. If K. achieves a success, Mr. A. will be able safely to support him. If he fails, then Mr. A. will be able to support the other side. Cynical as this may seem, the course suggested is the best for the nation as well as being easiest for the P.M.. B. says Mr. A. is easy to do business with—very quick and definite. If any topic requires prolonged investigation, he puts it aside for consideration and announces his decision later. He told B. that the speaking at the Guildhall Banquet was very poor.

WEEK ENDING 13TH.—Several interviews this week with Simon regarding the Censorship. The Foreign Office now suggest that the censorship of incoming cablegrams to newspapers should be relinquished and that the newspapers should exercise their own discretion as to what should and should not be published. They also propose that (although I think this suggestion really emanates from Simon) a fortnightly conference should be held, at which the Foreign Office should explain their views on policy, etc., to the editors. This plan was outlined by Simon at a meeting at which several editors were present. It was not well received, as the editors very properly felt that periodical meetings of this sort would speedily degenerate into formal and uninteresting affairs. In the alternative it was suggested that a meeting should be called whenever the F.O. had an important communication to make.

14TH.—Dined with L. G.. He says he does not know how

he can get through his departmental work this week and also attend the Committee. He thinks of resigning from the latter. He does not like the atmosphere. L. G. says he will be judged by the success or failure of the Munitions Department and that he cannot attend to it and attend the Committee as at present constituted. I told L. G. it would be a mistake to give up the Committee and suggested he should appoint an Assistant Minister of Munitions with power to give decisions. He said it would be difficult to find a suitable man. Mrs. L. G. also strongly advised him not to resign.

L. G. gave me some interesting facts regarding his Department. When it was founded the Germans were producing 250,000 high-explosive shells a day, the French nearly as many, and Great Britain 700 only! L. G. said he thought it time that these and similar facts should be stated publicly to counteract the malicious falsehoods which were being circulated regarding the Munitions Department. L. G. asked me whether I agreed. I replied in the affirmative. L. G. spoke of Winston, who, he said, is going to the Front.

26TH.—Met Sir Edward Carson for the first time. Much struck by his gentle manner and kindly ways. He made some humorous remarks regarding the amount of talking done in the Cabinet; but spoke highly of L. G.. Carson said he was sorry Winston had resigned, as he was one of the few men of action in the Government. Lack of ambition, he said, had always been his own defect. "For example," said he, "one day I got a letter from Halsbury offering me the position of the President of the Probate Divorce and Admiralty Division. It came upon me like a thunderbolt. I had never contemplated being promoted to the Bench. I saw Arthur Balfour, who said, 'I suppose the days of the Ministry are numbered. The avidity of the lawyers for position is usually a sure sign!'" I (R.) interpolated, "Just as the birds of prey hover round a dying man!" "Yes," said Carson, "that is what he meant. Well, I wrote to Halsbury declining his offer. In doing so I said it came upon me as a surprise, as I had no such expectations or aspirations. Of course he would not believe what I said, but I was quite sincere." Carson has a curious way of blinking his eyelids, not unattractive. He told me a good

story concerning Disraeli and Biggar, who used to take off his boots during all-night sittings. Disraeli was seated on the bench in front of Biggar, who placed one of his stockinged feet on the back of the bench on each side of Disraeli's head, with the most comical effect. "What is happening?" inquired one of Disraeli's friends, who had just entered the house. "We fear foot and mouth disease," responded Disraeli in sepulchral tones!

28TH.—L. G. and I played golf and lunched together. He says things are very unpleasant in the War Council. The atmosphere is strained and unfavourable to the transaction of business. L. G. is jubilant at the result of the Merthyr election, and well he may be. Stanton, the Independent Labour candidate, has beaten Winston, the official Labour candidate, who has been flirting with Ramsay MacDonald and the I.L.P., by 4,000 votes. A great triumph for the war party.

We talked of Cabinet Meetings. I asked whether there was any Agenda. L. G. said, "No, but the P.M. usually has a written list before him of the matters which are to be dealt with." L. G. considered that time is frequently wasted at the commencement of the meetings, with the result that important business is hurried at the end. He gave an account of the conferences of the Allies, over which he has been presiding this week. He says, had similar meetings taken place earlier in the war, much time and money would have been saved. K. is expected back in a week or ten days. L. G. says he does not yet know what will happen on his return, i.e. whether he will go back to the W.O.. Since his departure a wonderful change for the better has taken place. It is now possible to transact business with reasonable facility.

30TH.—Brade lunched with me. He says K. will be back to-morrow, but he does not know whether he will return to the W.O.. K. has had no letters and does not know what has happened in his absence. While he has been away important events have occurred. L. G. has been very busy taking over the Ordnance Board, etc.. Brade had a letter from him on the subject, not only written but directed in his own handwriting and marked "Urgent." Brade mentioned this to Asquith and commented on the rarity of such a communication. Asquith

remarked that such an event was indeed rare. He seems to have assisted L. G. to carry out his plans. Brade said that L. G. had displayed great courage in taking over these highly technical departments in the face of strong military opposition. The position regarding K. is amazing. No doubt the P.M. is between the devil and the deep sea. If K. does not agree to take up other duties, the P.M. may be faced with the recrudescence of the resignations difficulty in the Cabinet. If K. resigns the Government will be much weakened in the country. The people implicitly believe in K. and distrust the politicians. Brade is looking forward to to-morrow with no little curiosity and evidently some perturbation. He thinks K. will content himself with registering a protest against what has been done in his absence.

## Chapter XX

*The Government's critics—L. G. prepares to act—"Always too late"—Lord Derby's campaign.*

DECEMBER 5TH, 1915.—Dined with L. G. at Downing Street. Donald and Herbert Lewis, M.P., also. Little said of special interest. L. G. chaffed me for having cut my face while shaving. "You really must avoid drink!" he said. I replied, "I know another teetotaller" (L. G. himself) "whose face was badly cut last week." "Quite true," he rejoined, "*but you are not a member of a feeble and shaky Cabinet!*"

Lewis told me as I walked home that the Radicals are very suspicious of L. G. just now. They suspect him of being in close touch with Northcliffe, their arch-enemy. Lewis added, "I don't know if the charge is true or not, but the party are watching their late idol very closely."

11TH.—L. G., Mrs. L. G., Megan, Donald, and Franklin Bouillon, head of the Radical Party in France, to lunch at Walton. F. B. a very able, energetic man. He has come to England to interview members of the English Cabinet. On a mission, in fact. He told me that when dining with Mr. A. he urged upon him the necessity for more energy and decision on the part of the Allies. Mr. A. made no response, but went on with his meal, which F. B. described as significant and characteristic. F. B. told us that McKenna, whom he had seen, had spoken in the most gloomy way concerning the financial situation and had intimated that we might be unable to continue the war for lack of money. F. B. made a clever remark regarding Norman Angell and his anti-war theories. He said, "I declined to co-operate. His theories were based on the assumption that human actions were dictated solely by logic and self-interest. They overlooked passion—the greatest factor of all."

I had an interesting talk with him regarding Robespierre, who, he said, was much misunderstood in France. F. B. regards



him as one of the greatest of all democrats, and considers that he has been much maligned by people who formed their opinions on tradition and did not take the trouble to look up the facts. F. B. urged L. G. to improve his French with a view to the closer intercourse between France and England which is inevitable. The consequence was that L. G. bombarded us (in fun) with bad French all the afternoon.

In the evening I dined with L. G., Mrs. L. G., and Olwen. After dinner L. G. and I had a long talk. He inquired whether I did not think the country was becoming very anxious and dissatisfied with the Cabinet, and particularly with the P.M.. Last night L. G. dined with Waldorf Astor, who told him that he heard this on all sides. I said that I did the same. Everywhere one goes it is the same story. Everyone is complaining of the Government's indecision and lack of plans. I added, "The psychological moment is fast arriving for some action on your part."

L. G.: Yes, I have been lying very low of late. The moment has not yet come, but it is coming quickly. I am not sure that I should not have resigned with Carson. The public will say he did the right thing. However, now I must wait the turn of events. The situation is serious. The P.M. cannot make up his mind. Having formed the War Committee, he has rendered it practically useless by bringing in the Cabinet on all important occasions. Carson was right about Greece; we should have taken strong measures weeks ago. Read an article in this month's *Fortnightly Review*, which gives a very fair account of Asquith's character. The writer compares him with Lord North. Garvin developed this to me when we met last night at dinner at Astor's. North was a clever party manager, adroit in dealing with difficult political situations, but unable to conduct a great war.

The *New Statesman* recently published an article charging L. G. with having described the working-classes as drunkards and shirkers. L. G. wrote pointing out the inaccuracy, and concluded the letter with the remark that dullness is supposed to have the merit of accuracy, but that when it fails to achieve the popular expectation in this respect it is intolerable. The letter has not been published.

L. G. told me three good stories he had heard regarding Lord Westbury, the Lord Chancellor who was disgraced in 1865 for jobbing. These were told him by Asquith, Grey, and others at a dinner party this week.

1. When Westbury was removed from his office by the House of Commons, he was succeeded by Lord Cranworth, a dull man of no particular merit. Westbury said to Cranworth, "Now you see the advantage of being good instead of clever!"

2. Someone asked Westbury why Cranworth always called in the services of three more judges to advise him when about to deliver judgment in the House of Lords. Westbury replied, "I suppose for the same reason that a child does not like to be left alone in the dark!"

3. A judge met Westbury and announced his intention of retiring. Westbury inquired the cause. "I am old and deaf and stupid," said the judge. "My dear fellow," answered Westbury, "that is no reason. Take the Privy Council. I am old, So-and-so is deaf, and So-and-so is stupid, but we make quite a strong Court."

L. G. was in great form. He said that yesterday he went to Walton and slept nearly all day—much to his benefit. His vitality is certainly remarkable. He was frisking about like a boy.

L. G. made several references to Winston, and evidently regrets that he has left the Cabinet.

I asked Franklin Bouillon how he prepared his speeches—whether he made full notes. He said, "I sometimes write out a speech or portions of it, but not for use when speaking. I never use notes. To be successful a speech should follow a pre-determined plan—especially in attack. The first thought should suggest the second and so on. The ideas should follow in natural sequence."

18TH.—Dined with L. G.. Found him with his two secretaries surrounded by piles of papers, busily engaged in preparing his speech on the work of his Department. He says, however, that he will decline to speak unless he can do so before 7 o'clock to-morrow. The speech will occupy an hour and a half. He read me portions of it, laying special emphasis

on a phrase in which he said in emphatic terms that during the war we had always been too late. He said, "I know you will tell me not to say that!" I replied that he was wrong: I fully agreed and thought it desirable that the statement should be made. He is still gloomy about the war. He deplores the lack of co-ordination among the Allies and says the Serbian Army has been sacrificed in consequence. Like a political Mrs. Gummidge, he still hankers after Winston. L. G. says a man of action is sadly needed. One of his secretaries, named Layton,<sup>1</sup> is a professor of political economy at Cambridge. We had an interesting talk on the feasibility of issuing unredeemable paper money in large quantities. Layton and I contended that the effect would be to increase prices and that this would not be prevented by limiting the total issue to a sum far below the estimated capital value of the national assets. The value of the paper would tend to drop in accord with the ratio between the currency and the commodities to be dealt in.

31ST.—Lord Derby asked me to call and see him at the War Office. He said he wished to thank me. He spoke very kindly and with considerable feeling. He was also good enough to say that I had given him sound advice which he had found most useful. He seemed much perturbed at the suggestion which is being made in Labour circles that he had jockeyed the P.M. into the pledge to the married men. He said that the P.M. had rendered him every assistance, and that what Asquith had done had been performed entirely on his own initiative. I suggested that Lord D. should ask K. to make a public statement to the effect that three months ago he reluctantly arrived at the conclusion that compulsion would be necessary, that he submitted a memorandum to the Cabinet to that effect, but that he and the P.M. decided to make one more effort to secure volunteers. In pursuance of this resolution they asked Lord D. to undertake the campaign, as he had been so successful in Lancashire. He agreed and had done his best, but the result had not been wholly satisfactory, and it had now become absolutely necessary to introduce a modified form of compulsion in order to prosecute the war.

Lord D. said he had been asked to prepare some sugges-

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Walter Layton.





SIR MAURICE HANKEY.

tions for a speech by K., and agreed that something on these lines would go far to settle the controversy.

He said that after L. G.'s speech he wondered that K. and L. G. could remain in the same Cabinet. I said that whatever the speech implied, L. G. did not mention anyone by name. Lord D. laughed.

The Press are concerned at the growing practice of Cabinet Ministers and other public officials in granting interviews to persons not connected with newspapers and to foreign journalists, regarding important public affairs. At the request of the Conference I addressed a letter to the P.M. on the subject.

## Chapter XXI

*Haig becomes Commander-in-Chief—A woman spy—The arrest of F. E. Smith—Labour opposition to conscription—Asquith explains the blockade.*

JANUARY 5TH, 1916.—Golfed and lunched with L. G. and the L.C.J.. The former gave an interesting account of his trip to France last week. He says things are much more business-like than in French's time. There is a new spirit. Haig<sup>1</sup> seems very keen on his job and has a fine staff. L. G. says the Government is showing more grip in all Departments except air-raid defence. Bonar Law accompanied L. G., who says he lacks vitality. He soon tires, and went to sleep at one of the conferences. L. G. thinks Carson has the finest opportunity of any politician in the country. The need for a Parliamentary Opposition is in the blood of the people. They must conduct their affairs on those lines. At present they want a leader to voice their views. Carson is the only man available. If he were to give up his practice and devote himself to politics he would be a great figure. I suggested that it was unfortunate Parliament was suspended in the early part of the war. For months the Government was left to its own devices. The whole of our troubles are due to the lack during the earlier stages of the war of an effective Opposition, who would have stimulated the Government to action. L. G. agreed. (He did not agree at the time, by the way.) The L.C.J. also agreed.

Dined with L. G.. He says McKenna and Runciman have been urging that the size of the Army should be reduced by twenty divisions. To consider the question, the P.M. appointed a committee, of which he acted as chairman. The committee, after sitting six weeks, decided that the War Office demands were not only reasonable, but absolutely necessary.

A difficult case is coming before the Courts on Monday.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Douglas Haig had been appointed Commander-in-Chief in France on December 15th, 1915.

A Swedish lady who has been convicted as a spy and sentenced to be hanged is appealing. If the sentence is confirmed, we shall be open to the same criticism as the Germans in the case of Edith Cavell. On the other hand, if the Germans find they can use women spies with impunity, they will be likely to employ them in large numbers. The women will be told that they are certain, if caught and imprisoned, to be released after the war. L. G. asked what I thought. I replied that in this instance, if I were a judge I should reduce the sentence to imprisonment for life, but should state that in future cases offenders would be executed. L. G. said he was inclined to the same opinion.

Yesterday I heard that F. E. Smith had been arrested in France by General Macready, the Adjutant-General, on the ground that he had no permit and had been detained all night. L. G. said this was correct. F. E. was with L. G. and Bonar Law. They telephoned for permits, but G.H.Q. declined to grant one to F. E., who had gone to France to visit Winston. F. E., however, went on his way without a permit. He dined with Winston, and was arrested after he had gone to bed. He had to get up and accompany the officer, and as he would not give his parole that he would not leave or communicate with any person, he was placed in a bedroom under a military guard. Next morning he was released on the strong representations of L. G. and Bonar Law, and the military officials wrote an apology. L. G. described the arrest as monstrous, but added that if the soldiers had taken the obvious course of reporting F. E. to the Secretary of State for War, he would no doubt have been censured by the Cabinet for disregarding the military regulations. L. G. said F. E. had put him and Bonar Law in a false position by asking to accompany them, having no permit. They could not well refuse a colleague, although they knew he was acting irregularly.

Llewellyn Smith, Secretary of the Munitions Department, is returning to the Board of Trade. L. G. inquired whether I could suggest a suitable man as his successor. I replied that I could not at the moment unless he was prepared to take a business man. I said I thought he must be a civil servant. He



said he thought so too; an outsider might find a difficulty in getting on with the other Government Departments.

I strongly urged L. G. to attend the Free Church Conference this year. Dr. Clifford is anxious that he and Nicoll should do so. At first L. G. was doubtful. He said he was not disposed to divert his attention from getting on with the war. I pointed out that the continued support and goodwill of the Dissenters was an important factor. Ultimately he said he thought I was right, and that he would attend. He is to lunch with Nicoll and me on Thursday to discuss the details.

14TH.—Long and interesting meeting of the Admiralty, War Office, and Press Committee, convened to discuss feasibility of devising some method of punishing newspapers which habitually committed minor breaches of regulations of Press Bureau and thus inflicted injury upon their rivals by whom the regulations were observed. I moved a resolution to the effect that it was undesirable to create new methods of punishment or procedure and that the authorities should use the ample powers conferred on them by the Defence of the Realm Act. This was carried unanimously.

15TH.—Much Labour dissatisfaction with the Conscription Bill. I wrote L. G. criticising the drafting and pointing out the necessity for amending the Bill so as to preclude the possibility of industrial compulsion. He agreed. I also saw Bonham Carter, the P.M.'s secretary, as to the miners' opposition, which had been explained to me by Hartshorn and other leaders. I suggested that the P.M. should see representatives of the Miners' Federation. I told Bonham Carter that miners, railway men, and transport workers were not acting in conjunction with Henderson and that the miners considered they had been slighted by the Government. Smillie, the President, had advised the delegates to pay no attention to the P.M.'s statement to Henderson and his colleagues. This advice had been followed. Bonham Carter asked me to call and see him later in the day, and requested me to endeavour to arrange for the miners to ask the P.M. to receive a deputation. This, however, proved impossible, and I suggested to Bonham Carter that when he received the miners' resolution, he should then ask the Federation to come and see the P.M.. Carter acquiesced.

I also suggested that the P.M. should see the railway and transport workers. B. Carter promised to see the P.M. on the subject and to give him a general conspectus of the situation.

Golfed with L. G., the L.C.J., and Donald. L. G. full of spirits and more optimistic than I have seen him. He is satisfied that the Labour opposition to the Bill will be pacified, and ridicules anything in the nature of a strike. I drove down with L. G. and the L.C.J.. Yesterday I sent L. G. a copy of Nicolai's *Life of Abraham Lincoln* which I had obtained from New York. He said he was going to start reading it to-day.

In the afternoon we had an interesting interview with Dr. Boursa, editor of the Italian paper *Il Secolo*. L. G. spoke to him very frankly and he was evidently much impressed. Some of L. G.'s remarks concerning labour were rather strong, so I suggested that nothing should be published until he had seen the article. He used one good phrase. The Italian asked whether he thought a military victory would be necessary to end the war. "Yes," he replied. "You will have to crack the nut to get at the kernel; to wear away the shell by a process of attrition will take too long. Of course, the thinner the shell wears, the easier it will be to crack." I drove Dr. Boursa to Croydon. He gave me a warm invitation to Milan, of which I am unlikely to avail myself for the moment!

16TH.—Dined with L. G.. He says McKenna and Runciman are very unhappy regarding their anti-compulsion campaign. The Lord Chief was sure they would resign. The P.M. also thought their resignation certain, but L. G. told him he thought not. The P.M. was irresolute and acted only when he was told that a large section of his Cabinet would resign if he did not fulfil his pledge. The Liberal Members would have acted with him had he determined to ignore it, of course excluding L. G.. Henderson, however, told L. G. that he thought the P.M. had no alternative but to keep his word. L. G. thinks Henderson a courageous man. Lansdowne also acted with courage. L. G. does not know what will happen at the War Office. At present the arrangements are very unsatisfactory. K. is doing little or nothing. The difficulty is to

know whom to send to the War Office if K. goes elsewhere. Lee,<sup>1</sup> L. G.'s Parliamentary Secretary, has advised L. G. not to take the Department. He says the difficulties of administration are enormous.

Jack Tennant<sup>2</sup> is disappointed because he has not got a seat in the Cabinet. He says that the Jews (Samuel and Montagu) are still the chosen people, and that all he has got is the pass-over. I asked L. G. whether he had heard that Arthur Markham<sup>3</sup> is very ill. He said, "Yes. He tells me that he has got his death warrant. He is suffering from angina pectoris." L. G. endeavoured to cheer him by telling him that W. S. Caine had the disease for twenty-five years, during which time he conducted many political agitations. L. G. was in wonderful spirits to-night. He says he will have enormous quantities of ammunition for the troops in the spring. When I arrived, he started singing loudly. Then he caught Megan and gave her a boisterous embrace. He must possess wonderful powers of endurance. We had a long talk about labour. He fears trouble in Glasgow, regarding which I have been warning him for months past. He says he intends to take a firm line and would rather have a six weeks' strike now than later on.

21ST.—Bonham Carter asked me to call. He said the P.M. is anxious to explain privately to the Press the principles of the blockade before the debate on Wednesday, and asked my opinion as to the advisability of such a conference. I said some of the editors might decline to attend, e.g. the editors of *The Times*, *Morning Post*, and *Daily Mail*, but that on the whole I thought the conference would be useful. I arranged to call it for Tuesday next. I spoke to Northcliffe, or rather he rang me up on another matter. He said the editors of *The Times* and *Daily Mail* would not attend. He did not approve of conferences. He seemed anxious, however, to know what takes place. He says the Government intend to prohibit the import of newspaper and wood pulp and that a meeting has been, or is about to be, convened at the Board of Trade to discuss the

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Lee of Farnham.

<sup>2</sup> The Rt. Hon. H. J. Tennant, Under-Secretary for War, 1912-16; Secretary for Scotland, 1916.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Arthur Markham, Bart., M.P. for Mansfield; d. August 1916.

subject, and if possible to arrange to limit the size of newspapers during the war. He was, of course, very hostile to the project.

23RD.—Golfed with L. G., who says he has made up his mind to enforce the dilution of labour in Glasgow next week. He expects serious trouble—a prospect confirmed by private letters from Glasgow people who know. These I have been sending him for weeks past. He was full of energy and high spirits, and told me, as he has often done before, that when he has determined upon a fight he is always easier in mind than during the period of deliberation.

L. G. thinks the Government should have taken over the shipping at the beginning of the war and that the freight scandals would then have been avoided. He commented upon an article by the Military Correspondent of *The Times* which appeared on Thursday, in which the writer urged the necessity for concentration on the Western Front, and said it represented the views of the General Staff. He added that during the war the Press had performed the function which should have been performed by Parliament, and which the French Parliament had performed. I did not remind him that in the early part of the war he had been in favour of Parliament's being suspended, which I always thought a great error from the national point of view.

Northcliffe told me yesterday that the war will last at least five years. He is certain it will.

25TH.—The P.M. met the Press and made a convincing statement regarding the blockade. Some of the editors criticised the action of the Government. When one of them was speaking, the P.M. put two or three artful questions which entirely disorganised the speaker's arguments.

I suggested that in future, when an important agitation based on inaccurate knowledge of facts has been started by an editor, the department concerned should let him know the truth instead of allowing him to continue to commit blunders. Bonham Carter agreed.

Yesterday Runciman outlined his policy in regard to restricted imports of pulp and paper. I spoke for the Press, and the Conference was adjourned till to-day, when we had

another long meeting, one of the most momentous in the history of newspapers. Sizes will have to be reduced, and other economies effected. I have a difficult task; the views of the different proprietors are so divergent. Northcliffe has been in close touch with me, but it is difficult to know what he really wants.

## Chapter XXII

*L. G. on Northcliffe—A narrow escape for the Government—  
Asquith's nerveless policy—Estimates of Germany's strength.*

FEBRUARY 11TH, 1916.—Nicoll has published an article in which he proposes that Northcliffe should be appointed Minister of Air Defence. He suggests that the Government should disarm their chief critic and let him show what he can do. Northcliffe evidently regards the proposal seriously. To-day L. G. and Nicoll lunched with me at Queen Anne's Gate. L. G. soon mentioned N.'s article with evident curiosity. He said, "Northcliffe would not be a success. He has no experience of acting with equals. He would be specially handicapped in a Cabinet of twenty-two. He would be overcome by the inertia and combined opposition of his colleagues—trade unionism is strong amongst politicians—that is the trouble during a war like this. Usually a Minister thinks more of defending his own position than he does of the matter in hand. This is not peculiar to our country. The same thing obtains in France. When I was in Paris ten days ago, I had to attend a very important conference with Briand and his Chief of Staff. At the appointed hour Bonar Law, Sir William Robertson, and I were in attendance. Briand did not come, but sent a message to say he was detained in the Senate by an attack which Clemenceau was making on him. We waited, and later on he appeared, looking pale and distraught. During the conference his mind was evidently more engaged with the Clemenceau attack than with the business, important though it was. Our Prime Minister is just the same. A Parliamentary victory really gives him more pleasure than anything else. He is essentially a House of Commons man. When he has vanquished his Parliamentary adversary he feels that the war is really making satisfactory progress."

Returning to Northcliffe, he remarked, "He is best where he is. Alone he might organise the air defence very well; but

many others could do that. You must secure an organiser who can organise successfully under our form of Government. A Minister cannot threaten resignation every day, and, unless he is strong and well supported, no threat would have much effect."

L. G. thinks the war will last until 1917, when we shall be able to give the Germans their quietus. He doubts whether much will happen this year of a decisive character. He is curious regarding the German plans, but hopes they will attack in the West. He says that a new spirit prevails at G.H.Q. in France since Haig's appointment. Haig is very keen and business-like. For example, directly after lunch he began to examine and discuss photographs of the trenches. L. G. commented strongly upon the condition of shipping freights, which he says may seriously affect our relations with our Allies, who believe that not only is the shipowner reaping a golden harvest, but that the British tax-payer is receiving half the profits in the shape of war tax. L. G. thinks the Government should have taken over the shipping as they did the railways, and may have to do so now. He told us that this afternoon he is to meet the distillers in conference, when he will announce his intention to take over practically all the distilleries during the war for the purpose of making materials for explosives. He spoke of this transaction—involving probably fifty millions of capital or more—as if he were about to take over a small business with a turnover of a few thousand pounds. L. G. thinks Fisher should be used, but in what capacity he does not know. He says Fisher has a genius for war. I suggested the War Council. L. G. replied that when Fisher was on the War Council he rarely spoke and was consequently of little use. He thinks Fisher would be most useful at the head of the Construction Department.

12TH.—Drove with L. G. to Walton Heath, where we lunched and played golf. Before starting he showed me with great pride a book of remarkable photographs of the new works which have been erected by or at the direction of the Munitions Department. He says he does not know whom to appoint as head of the Labour Department. L. G. dined yesterday with Colonel House, President Wilson's envoy, who has just

returned from Germany. The Colonel says the Germans are confident of victory and point with pride to the conquest of a larger area than the whole of the German Empire. L. G. remarked that he had not appreciated the extent of the territory now subject to the German armies. Colonel House told him that Falkenhayn is the brain of the German General Staff. He really directs all the campaign. Colonel House observed no marked indication of privation or strain. He seems to have talked very frankly to L. G., who says that the Colonel brought back no message concerning peace. Many of the Germans are no doubt anxious for peace, but peace on their own terms.

L. G. described his meeting yesterday with the distillers. He made his proposals in a ten-minute speech and then turned to his assistant and inquired if there was anything more to say, whereupon one of the distillers remarked, "Don't you think you have said enough?" L. G. said it was remarkable that such a proposal excited so little criticism or opposition, considering the violent controversy which would arise in peace time regarding even the most moderate interference with the trade.

To turn to a lighter topic, L. G. intends this evening to make some Welsh toffee, such as he made when a boy. He discussed the ingredients at some length and seemed rather hazy on the subject.

13TH.—Dined with L. G.. The toffee really a great success; the maker very proud of his achievement, on which I complimented him. We discussed the conduct of married people in public. L. G. says no couple are entitled to indulge in public demonstrations of affection until they have been married twenty years; until that period has elapsed they cannot be sure that they will not have a violent disagreement which may terminate their relationship. He added, "We have been married for twenty-eight years, so we are justified in making a public demonstration." Whereupon he kissed "Maggie bach," as he calls his wife.

We talked of Edward Grey. I inquired if he is good company. L. G. replied in the affirmative. He says that Asquith, Grey, Balfour, and Crewe make a very good party. L. G. thinks



Grey has managed the Balkan situation not well. If the war had been held off, he said, probably it would never have taken place. He added, "I must confess I never thought we should have war. I saw how horrible it would be if it happened. You will remember what I told you on the telephone one Sunday night shortly before August 4th. I said then and I believed that peace would be maintained." L. G. sent Olwen to the piano to play the Marseillaise and the Russian National Anthem, both of which we sang with great fervour, after which he gave a vivid description of the scene at the Russian Opera shortly after the declaration of war, when Chaliapine and the whole chorus sang the Russian National Anthem time after time with a sort of savage vigour which led L. G. to say, "That nation will never give in." "And," he added, "they never will!"

17TH.—Had breakfast with L. G.. He considers the Government had a bad knock last night on the air-raid defence debate. Had a division been taken, they would probably have been defeated. L. G. thinks the Cabinet have been very remiss in relation to air-raid defence and that a Department should have been set up months since. This would have been done, so he says, but for the opposition of the War Office and Admiralty.

(Brade told me ten days ago that a Department is now to be set up, and his statement was confirmed by Sir Alexander Kennedy, who is now assisting the Government in connection with Air Defence.)

L. G. thinks Winston should have been made head of the Department. He says the P.M. is rattled badly. I remarked that his speech at the opening of Parliament was very slipshod and contained a split infinitive, which he would usually regard as worse than a German victory! L. G. laughed and agreed. He once more remarked upon the feebleness of the Government and added, "If we pull through, it will be the nation who will accomplish the feat in spite of the Government."

The immediate purpose of our talk was the appointment of a successor to Lord Murray as head of the Labour Department at the Munitions. The preliminary announcement that — is to succeed him has roused a storm in the Department. The

officials want a figurehead and there have been threats of resignation. L. G. still thinks — is the man and talks of accepting the resignations. I made inquiries and advised caution; the officials have the organisation in their hands and it would be difficult to replace them at short notice. L. G. is to think the matter over. He is not very well and obviously unfit for work.

25TH.—Have been busy organising dinner by the Press to Russian journalists. It took place to-day and was considered a great success. The Russians spoke admirably. Lord Burnham in the chair. As usual he was very kind and congratulated me on the arrangements. Everyone present seemed pleased.

26TH.—Motored to Walton; the roads deep in snow. Had tea with L. G., who had been busy with Megan making a snow woman, on which he had exhibited a placard bearing the word "Welcome" in Welsh. I had a long talk with him. He is perturbed at the progress of the battle at Verdun and thinks the French are losing ground. He is evidently dissatisfied with the condition of affairs here. He says the P.M. never moves until he is forced, and then it is usually too late. He fears we shall not improve matters until we get another leader. He says that at a time like this the P.M. should lead, not follow. Mr. A. has no policy and is growing like Walpole. L. G. added, "For my part I still say we must beat the Germans, and when they are beaten I would endeavour to make the peace real and lasting. A great nation like Germany must live."

L. G. then turned to the question of the strength of the German armies, which he said we had consistently underrated. He produced and read extracts from two papers which he wrote in December 1914 and February 1915, in which he estimated the German forces at seven millions. The War Office estimate was then considerably less. In these memoranda L. G. urged the immediate necessity for providing more men and mobilising our national resources to provide more guns, rifles, and ammunition. He also gave a vivid and, it now appears, accurate conspectus of the military situation in the East and West. The February memorandum was accompanied by a letter to the P.M.. No notice was taken of his warnings and he could get nothing done. He considers that Bonar Law is

partly to blame, as he does not take a strong line with the P.M.. He thinks Bonar Law's position difficult, as he has no support in the Cabinet from his own party. I inquired whether the time had come when he (L. G.) should say something publicly. He replied, "I should have to resign." I said, "You would have to explain the reason and give specific causes." "That is what I should be unable to do," he answered. "But I could say I had resigned because I was dissatisfied with the conduct of the war. I could give some reasons and could explain my inability to give the rest in public." I inquired whether his work at the Munitions was sufficiently advanced to justify resignation. He replied, "I shall have all the stuff ready by August." He says Asquith will not face unpleasant facts. L. G. is evidently very restless and dissatisfied. Unfortunately I could not continue the conversation. I asked how F. E. Smith was doing in the Cabinet. He replied, "Very wisely he does not say much, but what he says is good. He made an admirable three minutes' speech on conscription and put the case extremely well."

## Chapter XXIII

*Fisher in a dramatic scene—Churchill offers to shake hands—  
W. M. Hughes criticises the Cabinet—L. G. again talks of  
resignation.*

SUNDAY, MARCH 5TH, 1916.—To lunch with L. G.. T. P. O'Connor<sup>1</sup> and Donald came also. Long talk on the advantages of the French Parliamentary Committee system. L. G. thinks it would be well to introduce it here; it would ensure proper supervision of the various Departments. Under our system there can be no adequate criticism in war-time, as members of the House of Commons do not know the facts—and if they did, there are many topics which cannot be publicly discussed. There are many able men in the House of Commons who are not utilised and who are capable of rendering excellent service in the direction indicated.

8TH.—Dined with Robertson Nicoll, who told the following regarding his latest communications with Lord Fisher :

" I [Nicoll] went to tea to the Duchess of Hamilton's. I was asked to go there by Lord Fisher. The Duchess, formerly Miss Poore, lives in a flat near St. James's Palace; she is a charming woman about forty years of age—one of the most charming I have ever met. When I entered the room she shook hands with me, and then took a ring off her finger and put it in my hand. She said it belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots. It was a fine ring set with a large sapphire. She said she knew I would be interested in it because I was a Scotsman, and that I should have to be great friends with the owner. We had tea. Lord Fisher was there. The tea did not take long. When the things had been removed, the Duchess said, ' Well, let us now proceed to business.' She then produced a number of documents very neatly tied together with india-rubber bands. These documents completed the story which Lord Fisher had told me on the previous Friday. The Duchess read them. It appeared that Jellicoe had come to

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. T. P. O'Connor, M.P.; d. 1929.

London and that he had been to see the Cabinet or War Council. [I, G. A. R., forget which.] He had not seen Fisher beforehand, but had expected to meet him at the Cabinet or Council as the case may be. He and Fisher had then drawn up a memorandum containing particulars of six or seven points relative to the Navy. This Fisher had sent to the P.M. on behalf of himself and Jellicoe. While we were discussing these matters, the telephone bell rang. The servant came to tell us that a message had come from the Prime Minister to say that an important letter had been sent to Lord Fisher. Instructions were given that the letter should be sent to the Duchess's. In due course it arrived. Fisher handed it to the Duchess, who opened it and read it aloud. It was an invitation to Fisher to attend the War Council on Tuesday. He said he would not go. I got up and said, 'Admiral, it is your duty to go.' The Duchess said, 'This is what I have told him.' Fisher then said, 'Very well. I will go!' This was a dramatic moment—one of the most dramatic in my life. Here was I, an elderly journalist, a person of no particular importance, giving advice which might affect the destinies of the British Empire. Fisher said that he was in communication with Lord Loreburn<sup>1</sup> and that nineteen other peers were prepared to act with Loreburn should the Cabinet not be willing to take his, Fisher's, advice. Fisher's proposal was to state his case in the House of Lords and to ensure the support of the group of peers above mentioned. When I left, Fisher came to see me into the lift and I said, 'You must send Loreburn all the documents. Promise me that you will.' He demurred a little and then said, 'By God, I will send them!' What happened at the War Council yesterday I do not know, but no doubt I shall hear. Fisher is also working with Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*. It was Scott who introduced Loreburn into the matter. Fisher told me that Winston had sent to him and suggested that they should shake hands and let bygones be bygones. His reply was, 'I will shake hands when you have withdrawn in public all the allegations which you have made against me. I decline to resume our former relations until then.'"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Chancellor, 1905-12; d. 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Churchill denies the truth of this story.



THE LATE SIR REGINALD BRAIDE.



10TH.—To breakfast at L. G.'s at Downing Street, to meet W. M. Hughes, the Australian Prime Minister. Mrs. Hughes, Donald, and Gwynne of the *Morning Post* also of the party. Hughes struck me as an able man. He is very deaf but remarkably acute and direct in what he says; the ablest Colonial politician I have met. The following is a *précis* of the most important parts of the conversation:

L. G.: Now tell me, Mr. Hughes, generally speaking, what are your views as to the conduct of the war, looking at it from an outside and independent standpoint?

MR. H.: Well, I will tell you how it appears to us. We have often talked it over, Fisher (now High Commissioner) and I. We have an impression that your affairs are being conducted by a number of able men, but that each is acting on his own initiative. Steps are taken from time to time which in themselves seem wise and sagacious. It is, however, obvious that they form no part of any definite plan. There seems to us to be a complete lack of control and co-ordination. We think the British Empire combines such huge resources that if they were massed even by a very ordinary individual with the object of carrying out a settled plan, they must achieve the desired object.

Then, lifting his right fist and striking it violently against his left hand, he went on:

"The weight would be so great that everything would have to give way before it. Take Australia, for example. We were not asked to supply men. Had the Government come to us and said, 'We want 300,000 men from Australia for a certain purpose and armed in a certain way,' we would have provided the men and would have carried out the scheme with very little assistance from London. It seems to me, however, that you have no definite plan. Unfortunately I have had a great experience of strikes. I do not like strikes. I don't approve of them, but often one is compelled to take part in movements of which one does not approve. Sometimes one has to choose between two evils. There is only one way to run a strike: it must be run by one man. You must club the strikers and their committee into subjection. Let them talk as much as they like, provided they talk in private, but one man must



decide on the plan and be responsible for its execution. Of course he must get the best advice he can, but the ultimate decision must rest with him and he must furnish the driving force. I do not profess to know much about naval or military affairs, but so far as I can see, a war must be run on the same lines as a strike."

L. G.: That is a very good criticism. I entirely agree with it.

GWYNNE: I have been saying that ever since the war started.

L. G.: So far as I am concerned, I am prepared to serve under any man and to do what I am told, but he must have a plan and must tell me what I have to do. Let him say, "I want so many guns and so many shells," and I will do my best to get them for him, but he must say what he wants. By the way, what did you think of our Cabinet yesterday, Mr. Hughes?

Mr. Hughes, who was at that moment conveniently deaf, asked to have the question repeated. Then he made the witty reply, "It is not for me to revile my creator." L. G. laughed and said, "Well, I suppose our Cabinet is like most other Cabinets. The French Cabinet is not unlike ours, but to my surprise Poincaré talked a good deal."

HUGHES: I thought you all looked very anxious, like the members of most Cabinets. As I sat there, I looked round the table and I thought the members all looked very clever men. That is your trouble. You have got too many clever men.

L. G.: Quite true. Twenty-three clever men could not run anything.

HUGHES: True. It would be better if you had fewer clever men and more ordinary ones. You would get more done.

L. G.: Yes, but I think that all my colleagues think as I do. They are all willing to work under one man and to do as they are told, if they feel there is a definite plan of action which is being resolutely and persistently pursued.

The conversation then turned on Gallipoli. Mr. Hughes referred to the letters written by the representative of the *Sydney Morning Herald* to himself and Mr. Asquith. Hughes said that for three nights after receiving the letter he could not sleep, it worried him so much. He added, "When the bad news came, they inquired, 'Well, what are you going to do?'

I said, 'I am going to raise 50,000 more men!' " He described the evacuation of Gallipoli as one of the greatest events in the history of British arms.

L. G. said that Winston's speech last night was a great error. " He should have stopped after criticising the Administration. When Winston remarked, 'I am now going to make a practical suggestion,' I wondered what he was going to say. Bonar Law whispered to me, 'He is going to suggest the recall of Fisher.' I could not believe it. Of course, if his object was to ruin Fisher's chances, he did his best to achieve it; but I do not believe he would act in such a Machiavellian way. That is not like Winston. On the other hand, if he meant to improve his own position, he made a great mistake."

A long talk then took place regarding the Navy. Gwynne said that Jellicoe is getting very tired. He has performed a wonderful work in training men, creating docks, etc.. Now the Government should be considering who is to succeed him, and he should be brought back to Whitehall to be First Sea Lord. Gwynne said that Beatty would be the best man to succeed him. L. G. did not commit himself about this.

11TH.—Called for L. G. at his new office at the Hotel Metropole. He showed me over his rooms with great satisfaction. He says Winston has made Fisher's return to the Admiralty impossible. L. G. also thinks it will now be impossible for the Cabinet to make Fisher a member of the War Council. I gave L. G. an account of Nicoll's interviews with Fisher, in which he seemed much interested. We lunched together. L. G. mentioned an article on Winston in this week's *Spectator*. We sent out for the paper, and I read the article aloud. Very bitter, but, as L. G. said, on the whole very true. He thinks, however, that Winston may retrieve his position.

We motored to Walton Heath. L. G. told me an amusing story concerning Kitchener. While the War Council was sitting, the result of the Herts. election was brought in on a piece of paper and handed round. K. could not understand what it was all about, and L. G. had to explain. He said that K. did not know there was an election and thought the figures had some military significance.

Dined with Donald; T. P. O'Connor the other guest.

After dinner a letter arrived for Donald from the Duchess of Hamilton concerning Fisher's claims, in which she said she hoped Winston's speech had not injured Fisher's prospects and that very shortly Donald would be able to urge his claims. Donald said Fisher admitted he had not been a success at the War Council. He had lost his temper and referred to the Admiralty representatives at the Committee in contemptuous terms. In fact he had said he did not care a damn for the whole five of them. Donald told a curious story of a recent interview between him and Fisher at Victory House. Fisher locked the doors of the room and piled up some chairs against them. Whether this was the act of a foolish old man or a piece of clownish humour Donald did not seem to know.

T. P. says the question is whether we have sufficient destroyers, torpedo boats, etc.

12TH (SUNDAY).—Went to L. G.'s to dinner. He spoke at length upon the necessity for a constructive agricultural policy and said that after great trouble he had succeeded in getting a Cabinet Committee appointed to investigate the subject. He also referred to the necessity for constructing more lateral lines of railway at the front in France, so as to facilitate the massing of troops, artillery, etc.. He added, "No one deals with these topics in the House of Commons. This makes me feel that perhaps the time has come for me to leave the Government. If I did, I should not attack the Government; I should confine myself to constructive proposals. The war is really being run badly. The nation is not being organised." I inquired how the P.M. was now. L. G. responded, "Bonar Law said to me the other day, 'Asquith has no idea how unpopular his Government is.' That is quite true. So long as things are going smoothly with his colleagues and in the House of Commons, he thinks all is well. He does not understand the public. He does not like the truth, so I never speak to him except on business, nor do any of my colleagues."

L. G. discussed obituaries—a favourite subject of his. How much would T. P. O'Connor get? How much McKenna? How much Tim Healy? How much Dillon? I said T. P. would in ordinary times get two columns. L. G. agreed with this estimate. He told me that Lord Rendel had been one of

the first to recognise the possibilities of his (L. G.'s) career. He had written to him a year before he entered the Cabinet forecasting his future. The letter was due to a short speech made by L. G. on the temperance question. I asked what he thought of Fisher and how he got on at the War Council. He replied that Fisher had not done well at the Council, but he (L. G.) thought he would be the best man for the Navy. His policy is the same as that of the Admiralty Board, but he has more driving force and more power to get things done. "If we were faced with a sudden emergency, I should feel if Fisher was at the Admiralty that everything would be done that could be done."

L. G. says the Foreign Office want him to go to Italy, but he does not propose to go just yet. I asked if he was going to the Paris Conference. He said he thought not. In his opinion these conferences were quite useless. No business was done. There must be a set and definite purpose.

15TH.—To dinner with Nicoll and Donald. Much rivalry between them in showing letters from the Duchess of Hamilton in support of Fisher's claims. Both letters were in the same strain and both ran to several pages.

18TH.—Golfed with L. G., the L.C.J., and Donald. Political atmosphere cloudy. At these times the L.C.J. always appears on the scene. He says Asquith's stock is low just now, but that he will probably revive it by a clever speech. The Chief spoke of him as a wonderful person.

19TH (SUNDAY).—Dined with L. G. and Mrs. L. G. alone. He told me that Hughes, the Australian P.M., had spoken to him of the present unsatisfactory condition of affairs. Hughes said he had seen all sorts of people and was satisfied all was not well and that a change would have to be made. He had suggested that L. G. should see Bonar Law with a view to closer co-operation. L. G. remarked that he did not quite see the object in view. He would not be prepared to replace Asquith by Bonar Law. He thinks Asquith much superior to B. L. in every way—a much bigger man. I said, "Is not Hughes anxious to enter the War Council?" L. G. replied in the affirmative and said that Milner had seen him (L. G.) on the subject of representation of all the principal Colonies.

L. G. had also had a conversation with Hughes. L. G. had favoured the idea, but had told Hughes that if he joined the Council he should be prepared to stay here more than five weeks. If he remained for that short period, he would be regarded as a visitor only and it would be difficult for him to take his proper place. It is invidious to criticise a visitor's proposals. Suggestions made by members are discussed and criticised. Sometimes they are adopted; sometimes they are rejected; and sometimes a compromise is reached. No one is hurt or offended because his views are not accepted. Then Hughes would have to read up the minutes so as to acquaint himself with what had been done. L. G. said this could easily be done, but it would be a big task merely to qualify for a five weeks' membership of the Council. L. G. thinks Hughes should stay here for at least six months and that other great Colonies should be represented. He would like to see Borden, Botha, and Smuts on the Council, particularly Smuts, of whom L. G. spoke very highly. He said that Asquith held a very moderate opinion of Smuts at the time of the South African War. Asquith did not appreciate what a remarkable man he was. L. G. again referred to Asquith's contempt of the Press. He regards most journalists as ignorant, spiteful, and unpatriotic. L. G. says the Government still lacks driving force, initiative, and foresight. Notwithstanding this, he thinks Mr. A. the best man for Premier, but wishes he would make him (L. G.) a sort of executive officer charged with the duty of listening to suggestions and exercising general supervision. L. G. has given up seeing Asquith privately to discuss matters or to urge suggestions.

24TH.—Was to have golfed with L. G.. At the last moment he telephoned he could not go but asking me to lunch at Downing Street. He said we would go to Walton after lunch. When I got to Downing Street he had not arrived. In about ten minutes he dashed in (2 o'clock) saying he had to go to France at 3 o'clock. We sat down to lunch, when L. G. gave an amusing account of his experiences of sea-sickness. I asked why he had so suddenly decided to go to France. He replied that M. Thomas<sup>1</sup> had come over purposely to get him to go,

<sup>1</sup> M. Albert Thomas, French Minister of Munitions ; d. 1932.

and that he (Thomas) had been to Asquith and Grey to ask them to persuade L. G. to attend the Conference. L. G. thinks nothing will be done, but thought it right to go in deference to the wishes of the French. He, however, does not propose to go to Rome at present. He does not wish to make a speech just now. Sir Henry Dalziel came to lunch. Dalziel tells me that he believes L. G. will be Premier before Christmas, and that Bonar Law has agreed to serve under him. They are all getting sick of Asquith, so Dalziel says. I inquired whether the fiscal debate of Thursday which was opened by Dalziel had been arranged between him and L. G. They both denied the rumour. L. G. started away in great form, singing lustily about the house before he went and giving elaborate instructions to Mrs. L. G. about his packing. I asked whether Kitchener was an amusing companion on these trips. L. G. said yes, and that Asquith and Grey are both good company, so that from that point of view all was well. But the sea—the restless sea—was the bugbear.

25<sup>TH</sup> (SUNDAY).—Franklin Bouillon came to tea with me at Walton. I asked him about the French Committee system. He says it has saved the nation. He described it in detail, and added, "Nothing could have worked better." He is a forceful, interesting man. He told me that if we had the enemy forty miles from London, the present system could not continue for twenty-four hours. It would be essential to let Parliament know the inner working of the machine.

## Chapter XXIV

*A recruiting crisis—Lord Stamfordham calls on Lloyd George—  
The Cabinet accepts the Army Council's demands.*

APRIL 1ST, 1916.—L. G. and family to lunch. He gave an interesting account of his Paris trip and handed Megan autographs of Briand and others, also a note written by Asquith during the Conference. L. G. says Briand is a fine speaker. He made an admirable ten minutes' speech at the Conference—quite first-class. He is dull and heavy-looking until he speaks, when his face lights up in a wonderful way. The Conference was a success—not because anything definite was accomplished, but because of the goodwill engendered. L. G. says, however, that the feeling in France concerning England is not happy. The French think they are making all the sacrifices and we are endeavouring to preserve our trade and carry on as usual. This he thinks may prejudice the alliance. He feels we should make strong efforts which will dispel this feeling. He had dinner with Carson on Friday. L. G. told me that he is much dissatisfied and thinks he must leave the Cabinet. He feels he is taking part in a fraud which is sacrificing and will sacrifice hundreds of thousands of lives. Mr. A. has no plan, no initiative, no grip, no driving force. He made a poor show at the Conference. L. G. thinks he will have to resign soon. The condition of affairs is serious. He spoke highly of Dr. Addison's management of the Clyde district. He says he is a clever, courageous little man. L. G. intends to be quite firm with the Clyde workers. Stevenson, one of the chief men at the Munitions, says the Labour Party will support L. G. because they intend to keep him in power until he has the opportunity to redeem his pledge to restore ante-war conditions. They mean to hold him firmly to this. L. G. was in great spirits at the Zeppelin having been brought down. He says this is a victory for General French.

8TH AND 9TH.—L. G. says Bethmann-Hollweg's<sup>1</sup> speech is most important. It discloses for the first time German plans of territorial settlement after the war. L. G. thinks the speech able and virile. With the exception of the *Daily News*, the papers have failed to recognise its importance. The political situation here is still disturbed. Derby wants to resign his position as Director of Recruiting. L. G. has persuaded him not to do so. His appointment was made to ward off conscription. L. G. favours conscription for all—married and single—but Bonar Law and the Tories funk the situation. Bonar Law told Donald two or three days ago he was not convinced we could spare more men from industrial occupations. L. G. thinks this statement accurately describes Bonar Law's views. I said, "Without support you can do nothing." L. G. agreed, and added, "It all rests now with General Robertson. If he is firm—and he has written some strong stuff—the country will follow him. I shall stand by his decision. He now has a great opportunity. If the Army Council say we must have more men, the country will be prepared to act on their views. According to the French figures we should have 6,000,000 under arms. We have not got 4,000,000. The French are becoming restive, and unless we put our house in order, the result may be serious." I said, "The case will have to be fully stated. The people do not understand the position. They do not appreciate what the French have done, nor do they know how many men we have under arms. They do not understand the present position of the war. They think the Germans are making their final effort and that it is a failure. If you want conscription, you must have the support of the Army Council, and you must state the case." L. G. agreed, but said it would be impossible to get the P.M. to make an adequate statement. He is still optimistic. He will not believe that we may be beaten; he thinks this impossible.

I asked what L. G. thought of the Budget Speech. L. G. said, "It was very good—clear and plain—no attempt at oratory." I said, "McKenna has altered his tone as to our financial resources. Some months ago he foreshadowed financial ruin. Now he talks in a more optimistic strain."

<sup>1</sup> Theobald von Bethmann-Hollweg (1856–1921), Imperial German Chancellor, 1909–17.



L. G.: Yes, I reminded him of that a few days ago.

12TH.—Telephone message from L. G. asking me to arrange for Nicoll to lunch with him and me to-morrow. Nicoll was engaged for lunch, so I arranged the appointment for tea at Queen Anne's Gate. Later L. G. telephoned that Scott of the *Manchester Guardian* would come also.

13TH.—Nicoll and Scott arrived, followed by L. G., who said he had seen Scott earlier in the day. After the customary greetings L. G. picked up a copy of the Law Reports which was lying on my table and at random read a passage from one of Baron Parke's judgments.

L. G.: When I was in practice I always enjoyed reading the judgments of those old boys. They expressed themselves so clearly and laid down general principles.

R.: Asquith's style is very similar.

L. G.: I think his sentences are longer than theirs, but he has the same lucid style. Well, what do you think of the position, Sir William? I have got Scott's opinion and I want yours. We have had a Cabinet to-day to consider the recruiting question. The Army Council have made a strong report. We came to no decision. The discussion is adjourned until Monday.

R.: That is surprising. I thought the Cabinet always decided something.

L. G. (laughing): Yes, of course it is rarely that we fail to come to a decision. Decisions are our strong point. Now, Sir William, what is your opinion? Do you think I should go out? You will remember the interview we had in this house some time ago when you advised me to leave. I did not take your advice and I regret not having done so. But there is this to be said on the other side: Since then I have put munitions on a more satisfactory footing; the stuff is beginning to roll in. The Army are well supplied; General Haig, who is over here, says he has enough. That is something to have accomplished. Perhaps I did the right thing.

NICOLL: May I ask you a question? On what are you thinking of going out? On the enlistment question?

L. G.: One must have an immediate reason. Enlistment would furnish this, but I should really resign as a protest

against the general conduct of the war. We never do anything until we are prodded into doing it, and then we are always too late.

R.: You seem to have no plan. The war appears to be conducted haphazard.

L. G.: Yes, that is the trouble. There is no grip. Asquith and Balfour do not seem to realise the serious nature of the situation. They believe the Germans are becoming exhausted, but there is no evidence of that.

SCOTT: Recruiting would be the occasion but not the cause.

L. G.: Quite true.

NICOLL (after profound meditation): I think you should go out. You will be of more service out than in.

L. G.: I am glad to hear you say that. That is my opinion, and Scott agrees. What is your view, Riddell?

R.: You must consider the effect upon the country and our Allies. Your resignation will cause a shudder. On the other hand, if you feel that the conduct of the war is so inefficient that resignation is the only remedy, I think you should go. Much will depend upon the speech in which you announce your reasons. I suppose you will state the military advice, the Cabinet's refusal to adopt it, and your dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war? But you will have to give particulars.

L. G.: Yes, I shall have to give some particulars. As you know, my warnings and protests are in writing.

NICOLL: Will you be able to state the contents of the military memorandum?

L. G.: I shall state them. If Asquith declines to give me permission, I shall still insist upon giving the details. I shall say he has no right to impose secrecy upon me. What course I shall take if I resign, I don't know.

NICOLL AND SCOTT: You must remain in the House of Commons and form, not an Opposition, but a party of criticism.

SCOTT: But you must not confine yourself to a destructive policy; you must put forward a constructive policy.

L. G.: I agree. Carson is improving daily. He is managing his little group with great skill. He is a fine fellow.

NICOLL: He has no following in the country.

L. G.: Perhaps you are right about that. However, I have quite made up my mind. Unless they accept the Army Council recommendations, I shall go out on Monday.

NICOLL: Are you quite satisfied that we can spare many more men and maintain our exports?

L. G.: We have got to win the war and win it quickly. Far better temporarily to sacrifice our trade than to allow the war to drag on.

SCOTT: Is it certain that the additional men will shorten the period of the war, and may it not be highly dangerous to reduce the production of commodities? We have to pay for our imports.

L. G.: The exporting countries will give us credit, and in the long run we shall be better off than if we permitted the war to drag on, as it will do unless we secure the necessary men.

R.: But may we not lose our trade connection and may it not prove impossible to recover it after the war?

L. G.: I do not regard that as a serious possibility.

The conversation then turned again to the Army Council memorandum.

L. G.: Much depends on General Robertson. The question is whether he will stand to his guns. Asquith has treated him most unfairly. Robertson was a member of the first Cabinet Committee on Recruiting, but Asquith has excluded him from that which has just reported, although his subordinates are members of it.

R.: Why?

L. G.: I suppose he thinks Robertson will be awkward.

The interview lasted for nearly two hours. L. G. seemed in good spirits. He went away with Scott.

Nicoll tells me he had lunch with McKenna a few days ago. Fisher and the Duchess of Hamilton were there. Nicoll says McKenna talked freely of Asquith and criticised him severely for his failure to come to decisions. McKenna said further that he would favour a change in the head of the Government if he could see an alternative.

According to Nicoll, Fisher is very restless after he has

been sitting down for some little time, and finds it necessary to get up and walk about the room. Fisher, the Duchess, and Winston are now bosom friends. Nicoll still thinks Fisher fit to take charge of the Admiralty, but has told him he must take steps to criticise the conduct of naval affairs in Parliament. Fisher has agreed and is about to hold a drawing-room meeting of peers, including Lord Sydenham. The Loreburn agitation on Fisher's behalf seems to have faded. Nicoll says Fisher and the Inventions Board resigned recently because the Sea Lords would not try any of the inventions which they recommended. Balfour then called them to his house in Carlton Gardens, where they met the Sea Lords. Balfour heard the case of the Inventions Board and then declared that so long as he was First Lord the recommendations of the Inventions Board should receive due attention. Sir Henry Jackson<sup>1</sup> demurred to this sweeping declaration, but Mr. B. was firm and the resignations were withdrawn. A. B. saw Fisher to the door, and the old man was much pleased at the attention displayed.

14TH.—As I anticipated, the L.C.J. appeared on the scene this morning. He drove down to Walton with L. G., lunched, and played golf in the afternoon. He told me that last Sunday he stayed with the P.M. at his house on the Thames. What happened he did not relate, but I have no doubt that Mr. A. arranged for the tactful L.C.J. to bring his powers to bear upon L. G.. I inquired how the Chief regarded the situation. He replied that he was strongly opposed to L. G. resigning, as he thought the resignation would have a bad effect on our Allies. I said, "He seems very firm in his determination to resign unless the requirements of the Army Council are complied with." The L.C.J. agreed, but added, "I have been approaching him from several directions and I think I have shaken him a little." L. G. says he doubts if Asquith will give way. Asquith feels he is committed against further conscription.

I said, "We shall see whether the old P.M. will round this corner as he has rounded others. It looks like what motorists call a 'hairpin bend.'" L. G. says Mr. A. is bolder than he

<sup>1</sup> First Sea Lord, 1915-16; d. 1929.

was. He has apparently come to the conclusion that he can shed members of the Cabinet with impunity.

Thus end two exciting days. L. G.'s intentions are not of course surmised by the Press. He may be bluffing to get better terms from the P.M., but I think not. As old Nicoll says, "Whatever happens, it is very interesting." I wish the conditions were not so serious.

SUNDAY, 16TH.—Lord Stamfordham, the King's secretary, called to see L. G. with the object of prevailing upon him to abandon his intention of resigning. Davies, L. G.'s secretary, tells me that L. G. remained quite firm and that Stamfordham left evidently disappointed. I omitted to say that, on Friday, Scott suggested that L. G. should become War Minister. L. G. replied, "No, that would be impossible. Kitchener is playing the game, and I would not be a party to supplanting him."

Nicoll told me that he met Birrell, who remarked that he was glad the time was coming when he would be able to retire from politics and that he intended to go and live at Cromer. Nicoll responded, "I suppose you will write a big book?" "I shall think about doing so," said Birrell. "Doing is death. Dreaming is the real thing!"

20TH.—The political crisis is over. I called to see L. G. at Downing Street. He was alone, preparing to go to Criccieth for Easter. I said, "You have had a great victory. It must have been an arduous task." He replied, walking up and down the room, "It has been a trying week. I have had a hard fight. I have had to carry it on single-handed almost to the end, except of course for Robertson's assistance. He is a splendid fellow. When the dispute came to a certain point, Bonar Law turned round and made a great show of being firm and courageous. His followers compelled him to take that course. But I am sick of the Cabinet and sorry I am not out of it." I said, "I suppose all sorts of influences were brought to bear to persuade you to abstain from resignation?" L. G. answered, "Yes. Lord Stamfordham came to see me on Sunday. He was with me for an hour and did his utmost to shake my intentions. Eventually I said to him, 'There is one all-sufficient reason why I should not change my opinions.' He asked what the reason was. I

replied, 'I have taken an oath which prevents me from doing what you ask. I have sworn to serve my King faithfully.' That evidently settled him. He said very little more."

R.: That was a wise saying. I can quite understand its effect.

L. G.: Well, I accepted what the military advisers of the Government were prepared to accept. If they were satisfied, then there was every reason why I should be. As a matter of fact, Robertson finally settled the terms.

21ST.—Lunched at Carlton Gardens with Arthur Balfour, who arrived late, having been detained at the Cabinet. Lord Lansdowne called while we were at lunch and joined the party. A. J. B. brought the news that the crisis was over; that a settlement had been reached and that the facts and figures on which it had been based are to be stated in a secret session of Parliament to be held on Tuesday. He said he thought the settlement fair and one which would commend itself to all parties. He talked of the naval problems and in particular the shortage of mercantile tonnage due to German submarine attacks. He said that the discussion of this subject in the Press was inadvisable and that he would like my opinion as to the best course to adopt. I suggested he should meet the editors of the principal newspapers and make a statement to them, and that meanwhile I should issue a note requesting that no mention should be made of the shortage of tonnage. To this he agreed, and we arranged that I should call a meeting for Thursday next, when I proposed he should deal with other naval problems. He agreed as to the advisability of making such a statement.

The conversation turned on the armament firms. I told Balfour and Lansdowne about Zaharoff,<sup>1</sup> the wonderful man who controls Vickers and other armament firms. They had never heard of him, strange to say, and were much surprised and interested. B. said it was one of the most remarkable stories he had ever heard—like a novel—but that to be complete, the story should have included a statement that Zaharoff had engineered the war. Both B. and Lansdowne were very affable. B. is a charming host and remarkably youthful and

<sup>1</sup> Sir Basil Zaharoff, G.C.B., G.B.E.; b. 1850.

fresh in his ways. I congratulated him upon having supplied the papers with some light "copy" in the shape of the report of the lawn-tennis match he played with Bonar Law last week. B. had not seen the paragraphs.

24TH.—My wife and I dined with Brade to meet General and Lady Robertson and Bonar Law. Bonar Law talked very freely of the political situation, which he regards as serious. He considers the attack in the *Daily News* on L. G. vicious and uncalled for. He was evidently anxious to hear whether L. G. intends to reply to it. I, not knowing, was unable to enlighten him. He said he thought the article was due to political causes. B. L. thinks the Government may break up at any moment. He said that Asquith accepted the new conscription plan because he (B. L.) and his colleagues from the Tory side would have resigned had he not done so. B. L. wrote a seven-page letter to Asquith on Sunday (April 16th) announcing his final view and intentions. The letter was delivered to Asquith on the Monday. B. L.'s opinion was changed by the figures produced by General Macready to the Cabinet Committee of which B. L. is a member. Until he saw these figures he was not convinced. On the Sunday (April 16th) he spent a most anxious day, the most perplexing he had experienced since he became leader of the Conservative Party. Robertson said the figures had been submitted by the W.O. in March (I think he said in a memorandum dated March 19th), and expressed surprise that Bonar Law had not appreciated them earlier. "But," he added, "it is not a question of figures; it is a question of principle. If you are going to beat the Germans, you must put in the field every available man." How many men are available he does not know. That will have to be ascertained. The only method of getting the information is to take compulsory powers. Bonar Law replied, "You foolish soldiers think that the winning of the war depends only on men. You forget that it depends on money as well." This rather nettled Robertson, who retorted, "How about the foolish politicians? Only to-day I told my people to look out the memoranda I prepared and submitted to the Cabinet some years ago regarding the means of performing our Treaty obligations to Belgium and on Home Defence. They were brushed aside in the most

contemptuous way, and what has been the result?" Bonar Law then discussed the relative demands of trade and the Army, rather insisting upon the former, but ultimately admitted the necessity for compulsion to gather in the 200,000 married men who, it is admitted, can be spared. B. L. spoke highly of Asquith's judgment, but admitted his lack of grip and driving power. He thinks it would be impossible to replace him, and that if the soldiers were asked, they would say that Asquith is the best of the politicians in the War Council. B. L. turned to Robertson and said, "Don't you agree?" Robertson did not give a definite answer. B. L. continued, "The conduct of the war is in the hands of the soldiers. They are managing the military side. You [Robertson] may or may not be the best man. Personally I think you are, but however that may be, the military conduct of affairs is in your hands and those of your colleagues." Robertson remarked, "I have no fault to find with the War Council. It is quite good. Silly questions are asked; for example, the other day Mr. Balfour inquired why we kept so many men in Great Britain while France only manned the fighting line. The reply is obvious. We are fighting in one country; we have to defend another. Any novice should have seen that." Bonar Law recognised the force of the argument, but thought that in the main Balfour was right in criticising the policy of retaining so many men for Home Defence. Robertson answered, "You know that the Navy say they cannot prevent invasion. They cannot risk capital ships in order to prevent an attack on our coasts. It is therefore the duty of the military authorities to make ample provision to repel an invasion. When all is said, Great Britain is one of the most vital areas involved in the war." Bonar Law then turned the conversation to Kitchener, and remarked that our one great mistake in the war had been to appoint him Secretary of State for War. I said, "He has flashes of genius"; to which B. L. retorted, "I am glad to hear he has flashes of anything." I reminded B. L. that when K. was first appointed his colleagues regarded him almost with awe. B. L. replied, "Of course I was not then in the Cabinet, but I believe you are right." He said the Coalition was due to the munitions scandal and Fisher's resignation, and that he (B. L.) had full



knowledge of the shortage of ammunition before the subject was ever mentioned by *The Times*. He thinks that too much blame has been attached to Winston in respect of Gallipoli, and that the failure was really due to the inefficiency of the War Office. B. L. spoke much of L. G.. He said that L. G. recently came to him and remarked that there was no real confidence between them and that he would like a heart-to-heart talk. B. L. replied, "I do not confide in you because I do not agree with you." They seem, however, to have had a pretty frank chat. B. L. said that L. G. accused him of suffering from a severe attack of "funkitis." This seemed to amuse Bonar Law, but he went on to refer to the difficulties of the position and the consequent danger of making any change. I inquired his opinion of the freight question, which I said was causing grave dissatisfaction and uneasiness. He replied that he thought the condition of affairs scandalous, but that Runciman made a good case for doing nothing. B. L. added, "But you must make experiments and take risks. Logic is not the only thing to be considered." By this time it was nearly midnight, so we left. B. L. stayed on to play bridge, Brade having telephoned for the Attorney-General. I surmised, however, that the real object was to discuss the Irish Rebellion.

27TH.—Balfour met the Press at the Admiralty. He spoke for an hour and a half and gave an interesting account of the naval situation. He did not mention Fisher or Winston, but gave them some Balfourian thrusts which were not noticed by his hearers, but which conveyed the desired impression in a subtle way. Runciman also spoke, and I arranged he should make a fuller statement to the Press on a subsequent occasion concerning the freight question. Both A. J. B. and Runciman made a strong point of the great services rendered by Great Britain to the Allies.

28TH.—L. G. was to speak at Conway to-morrow, Saturday afternoon. At midday he telephoned to say there is a Cabinet to-morrow which will prevent his reaching Conway until to-morrow evening. He wanted to know if I thought he should speak to-morrow night or postpone till Monday afternoon. I advised postponement till Monday or the following Saturday. He decided to adopt the latter alternative. I called

to see him later at his office about 6.30. While I was waiting, I walked Geoffrey Robinson.<sup>1</sup> He had an interview with L. G.. L. G. told me that the *Daily News* article had really served him a good turn. It had rallied the Conservatives around him and also a number of people who dislike personal attacks. It had also served to cut him off from "that crowd," by which I suppose he meant the Radical Party. He added, "One must have friends." I said, "I am sorry to say the march of events has justified and will justify your position: the Irish Rebellion, the Fall of Kut, just announced; and the muddle regarding the Recruiting Bill, ignominiously withdrawn last night."

I drove away with L. G.. As he was leaving the Ministry he met David Davies, the colliery millionaire, with whom he had a short but earnest conversation.

I then had to leave L. G. and so heard no more of his plans, but evidently he contemplates a new party—a dangerous experiment at such a time. However, we shall see. I did not tell him that the working-classes think he is endeavouring to shackle them. Hartshorn, a good judge, came to see me last night. He says that a Minister should go to Wales to address the miners. Strangely, he proposed Bonar Law. He described L. G. as "impossible." What a change in a few months!

Had an interview with Herbert Samuel regarding the new Press regulations, which are causing much dissatisfaction. He is usually rather like an Oriental statue. To-day he was quite animated.

29TH.—L. G. came to dinner. He says he intends to speak out at Conway on Saturday next. He is going to tell the public the facts. He thinks he has prepared a good speech, but intends to think it over carefully before he delivers it. I warned him that the working-classes are not friendly to him at the moment and that he will have to be careful not to antagonise them any further. He said, "They will come round later on." I agreed, but emphasised the importance of not fanning suspicion and discontent, which are grave national perils. He said that Asquith evidently fears his speech. He has suggested that L. G. should visit Russia regarding munitions. L. G. proposes to postpone his temporary disappearance from the scene of action

<sup>1</sup> Editor of *The Times*.

here. His antagonism to his colleagues is becoming more and more marked. To-day he said, "They have had several severe blows this week—the withdrawal of the Compulsory Service Bill, the Irish Rebellion, and the fall of Kut." Bonar Law told him that if he had paid Gardiner<sup>1</sup> to attack him in the *Daily News*, the result could not have been more in his favour. The effect has been to show the public that he (L. G.) was the only Minister not responsible for the recruiting muddle. The House of Commons would not listen to the Cabinet compromise, which was far more than they were originally prepared to concede. I said to L. G. that the situation was serious and perplexing. How could a new Government be formed? If formed, it would find great difficulty in making immediate reforms and would have to bear the legacy of existing mismanagement. L. G. responded, "That is quite true. I don't want anything to happen just now; the time is not ripe. I doubt if a new Government could last for three months."

<sup>1</sup> A. G. Gardiner, editor *Daily News*, 1902-19.

## Chapter XXV

*Lord French on his campaign—Negotiations for an Irish settlement—Asquith goes to Dublin—Lloyd George appointed Peacemaker.*

MAY 4TH, 1916.—Attended deputation to Home Secretary and Attorney-General regarding Defence of the Realm Regulations affecting the Press. I presented the case. The Ministers promised very slight concessions, and I told them plainly we should continue our agitation.

5TH AND 6TH.—Robertson Nicoll and I went with L. G. to Conway to hear his speech. Very effective. On the way back much talk of parsons and sermons. We all agreed that Spurgeon was the greatest preacher we had heard. It was also agreed that the late Victorian preachers of all denominations were much superior to those of the present time.

13TH.—Golfed with L. G.. He wants me to arrange a conference between him and the Press, which I have promised to do.

L. G. thinks the Germans are short of food, but that their condition will improve after the harvest.

14TH.—L. G. and I lunched at Reigate with Lady Kitty Somerset. Quite a large party, which did not please my companion, who understood we were invited to meet Lord Fisher and Lord French only. Fisher was not there. I had a long talk with French, who spoke freely concerning his campaign in France and his views as to the duration of the war. He said he did not see any prospect of the Allies making a successful offensive in the West and that the prospects in other theatres of the war were equally doubtful. War had been so completely changed by modern artillery and means of observation and communication, that the powers of the defensive had been enormously increased. The unexpected was, however, one of the ruling factors in war, and it might well be that his prognostications would prove fallacious. He was good enough to

ask my opinion as to the duration of the war. I replied that I was not capable of forming any judgment, but I thought it might last at least another twelve months. He said, "Yes, at least another twelve months. The question is what we should do." I answered, "We shall have to go on." To which he responded, I thought half-heartedly, "I suppose we must." He told me he was sorry to return from France and only did so at the solicitation of the Prime Minister. I asked French whether he had felt a great strain during the retreat in August 1914. He said, "No, it did not affect my health. I take things as they come. I felt far more anxious during the first battle of Ypres, when the Germans nearly broke through our lines. I was terribly afraid they would capture Calais. Had they done so, they might have made it a submarine base and cut off not only our supplies but the essentials, such as steel, which the French import from England. That was a truly anxious time." He said he wanted Joffre to make a stand at the Marne, but he declined and projected the army which debouched from Paris. French considers this a remarkable piece of strategy, which will occupy a great place in history. The General looks older and is not nearly so alert and energetic as when I last saw him in August 1914.

*Later.*—T. P. O'Connor, Joseph Devlin,<sup>1</sup> O'Farrell, and Browne, the Irish barrister, arrived at Walton Heath intent upon negotiations for the settlement of the Irish question. They wanted to see L. G., so I arranged for them to dine with me. The Irish had a long chat with L. G., who ultimately promised to see Carson and Northcliffe. The Nationalists are evidently very anxious for a settlement. T. P. and Devlin both spoke in strong terms of Dillon's speech in the House on Friday, which they characterised as a tragic blunder. At the party meeting Dillon had emphasised the necessity for delicate treatment—"looking," said Devlin, "very severely at me!" T. P. O'Connor told me he was busy on Friday night until a late hour—interviewing various people (including Lord Derby) with the object of securing their support in favour of a settlement. He said that most of them were willing to assist.

<sup>1</sup> Nationalist M.P. for West Belfast, 1906-18; now for Fermanagh and Tyrone.

Devlin told an amusing story of an old gentleman who was observed running along one of the streets in Dublin lined with soldiers, in which there had recently been heavy fighting. The officer in charge shouted, "Go back or you may be shot!" To which the old gentleman responded, "I must go to my hotel; I have forgotten my false teeth!" "Go back!" roared the officer, "or you may soon have no head to put them in!"

15TH.—L. G. and I golfed together in the morning. He said that Carson has a great opportunity to make a bargain with the Irish Party. I said, "You mean, I suppose, that Carson should agree to Home Rule for a certain area in return for the application of compulsion to Ireland?" L. G. assented. He said it was a pity he was in the Government, as otherwise he would have had the task of making the bargain. He said in reply to my inquiry that he doubted whether Asquith had gone to Ireland with any plan. He thinks he went chiefly to avoid a Parliamentary difficulty. L. G., like all politicians, possesses a firm belief in himself and his power and ability to cope with difficulties. Self-confidence is necessarily part of the politician's stock-in-trade; without it he could not carry on. L. G. often says Asquith is not a War Minister, and although he does not add, as he might well do, that he himself has the capacity, obviously is fully assured he has.

21ST.—A long chat with Brade, who says that French is angry that the account of the Loos battle, published yesterday, was not first submitted to him. Kitchener was going to Russia, but the visit is off for the moment. K. is not very happy—rather like a lost soul. I hear from his architect, Blow, that he spends more and more time upon his house in Kent. His position is remarkable. In the War Office and Government circles he is spoken of in the most depreciatory terms, but never by Brade, who always insists on his good qualities and great services, of which he is well able to judge.

L. G. has gone to spend the week-end with Colonel Lee. There is no doubt that L. G. and Northcliffe are acting in close concert. The Radicals are wobbly, and, as L. G. says, one must have friends and allies.

L. G. indicated to me on Monday that he has another big

job on hand—I imagine the settlement of the Irish question. I only saw him for a minute and he did not say much.

27TH.—L. G. called for me this evening and I returned with him for dinner. I said, alluding to his appointment to endeavour to settle the Irish question, "This is a great triumph for you, but the P.M. has side-tracked himself. His visit to Ireland was a great idea, and everyone wondered what he had brought back in his bag. It now appears that the bag contained nothing but a few relics of the rebellion."

L. G.: He brought back absolutely nothing. He had no plan and he funked the task of endeavouring to make a settlement. They all funked it.

L. G. spoke highly of Redmond, who, he said, had many of Asquith's qualities, which would have secured him a high position in this country had it not been for his faithful adherence to the Irish cause. He described Redmond as having style, which is always a valuable asset in this country where style counts for so much. He said Redmond had always declined to administer patronage either directly or indirectly. I inquired whether L. G. would hold a formal conference in connection with the Irish settlement. He replied in the negative, and said that if the conference were once to break down, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to re-establish it. He intends to carry on the negotiations by personal interviews, and said that he had already seen most of the principal actors in the drama.

We reverted to Asquith's position. I said, "This appointment gives you the reversion of the Premiership. Mr. A. and the Cabinet have admitted your position."

L. G.: Yes, if I pull it off, it will be a big thing. They have appointed me because I have certain qualities necessary for the task, but perhaps there were other motives which led them to make the proposal.

R.: Have you seen the paragraph in the *Nation* which suggests that the effect of the appointment has been to put the Premiership in commission?

L. G.: Yes, but of course it may be, and probably is, mischievous.

R.: It is suggested that you intend to give up the Muni-

tions. You would surely not be so foolish when your labours are coming to fruition.

L. G.: I have no intention of taking any such foolish course. I don't mean to let someone else enjoy all the credit while I have had to undergo all the anxiety and criticism.

The plot thickens. L. G. is very angry with Spender of the *Westminster Gazette*. He said to-day, "Even if the *Westminster* is the Government organ, that is no reason why they should attack me. Am I not a part of the Government?"

L. G. never tells me about his meetings with Northcliffe, but I am sure they are in daily contact.

31ST.—Nicoll tells me that Fisher has written some most incendiary letters to Jellicoe and the Emperor of Russia. Fisher sent copies to Nicoll, who returned them at once without making copies, as he was afraid to keep copies of the letters in the house. Nicoll now thinks that Fisher is in a dangerous state of mind and that his return to the Admiralty would be perilous.



## Chapter XXVI

*News of Jutland—The death of Kitchener—Lloyd George becomes Secretary for War—Decline of the Irish Party.*

JUNE 2ND, 1916.—News of great naval battle of Jutland, from which it appears that we have suffered a severe reverse.

3RD.—Called to see L. G. at Walton. Found him very excited regarding naval news. He spoke in strong terms of Balfour and the Board of Admiralty. He said Fisher should have been recalled, but that A. B. did not like to be surrounded by strong men. L. G. complained that no meeting of the War Council had been called to consider the situation. He said he did not think it right to play golf and intended to go to London, which he did. He again referred to the serious position of affairs and the P.M.'s neglect to recognise it. He described him as resembling a family doctor in attendance upon a patient who was seriously ill. If the patient appeared a little better, he would say, "Well, you see, his condition is improving." If he appeared worse, he would remark, "Well, you must expect these variations." While on the balance the patient was gradually approaching his end—a fact which the doctor failed to mention or appreciate.

L. G. is evidently very bitter. He said that when he raised the question of postponing the Whitsuntide holiday, Arthur Balfour remarked, "I agree, but so far as the Admiralty is concerned, there is no necessity!" L. G. said that Balfour quite failed to recognise the importance of not losing a day in the Admiralty preparations.

We discussed the Irish settlement. L. G. intimated that the leaders were favourable, but that they had gone to Ireland to consult the Party leaders there. He did not seem very confident of the result. In the evening he came to dine. T. P. O'Connor and Sir Gilbert Parker were also of the party. L. G. said Chamberlain was never really happy with the Conservative Party, and that he had always remained a Radical. He also

said that no Radical could ever lead the Conservatives, no doubt thinking of himself, but added, "That is, of course, if it remained the Conservative Party." He told us he thought the final settlement of the Irish question lies in Imperial Federation and that the Colonies would in future decline to be committed to a war in the making of which they had no voice. Hughes, the Australian Premier, told him this so far as concerns Australia. Parker pointed out the difficulties of Imperial Federation, and I suggested that in the first instance it would be necessary for the conferences to be informal. L. G. thought an Imperial Parliament practicable. When discussing the Irish question, he remarked that revenge was the most unprofitable of all pursuits, and that whenever he felt the desire for revenge arising in his mind he always resolutely stamped it out.

4TH.—The Admiralty have adopted the unusual course of getting Winston to write a semi-official *précis* of the naval battle, based on the official documents. There is much criticism concerning this novel departure—no doubt a skilful device by the Admiralty to draw the teeth of their chief potential critic. [It now appears that the *précis* was Sir Douglas Brownrigg's<sup>1</sup> idea.]

6TH.—Poor Kitchener has been drowned. I feel very grieved. We got on well. He was a great man, but very uneven.

8TH.—Called to see Arthur Balfour to question him in relation to the Jutland Dispatch which has caused so much consternation. He said that Jellicoe telegraphed on Wednesday afternoon that a battle was impending, but that no further message was received from J. until Friday afternoon, although meanwhile the Admiralty knew from interrupted telegrams that a battle was in progress. Wounded ships were also arriving. Balfour did not inform anyone but the P.M. and Sir Edward Grey, who happened to call, of the message he received on Wednesday. I asked why the Admiralty did not publish a statement that a battle was in progress. Balfour replied that he was of opinion that such a statement would have occasioned unnecessary anxiety. I then inquired why he published the message

<sup>1</sup> Chief Censor at the Admiralty.

which caused so much consternation. His answer was that he thought it his duty to publish with slight excisions the telegram received from Jellicoe. Balfour handed me a copy of this, which I later read privately to the Press Conference. B. said that Jellicoe's subsequent telegrams showed that he considered that the Navy had gained a substantial victory and that the German Fleet was temporarily *hors de combat*. I got B. to dictate a memorandum to that effect, which I also read to the Conference. B. said he had an anxious time when waiting for news. I suggested that in lieu of the telegram which he published he should have issued a statement that a severe battle had taken place in which both sides had sustained heavy losses, that the German Fleet was in retreat, and that a further statement would be published immediately further details had been received. To this he gave no satisfactory reply. I explained that I was voicing the views of the whole Press. He commented adversely upon the action of the evening papers in publishing emasculated statements, and said that their action showed the inadvisability of issuing such important statements to the evening papers. This led me to remark that from that point of view he would have done better to adopt the course which I suggested or to postpone publication until the arrival of the more complete dispatch. He responded that in view of what had happened perhaps the latter plan would have been preferable. I said it now appeared that we had gained a considerable victory. B. replied that I must not over-estimate the result of the battle. I left him with the idea that he thought, although he did not say so, that the publication of the dispatch in the form in which it was published was a mistake. I complained that privileges had been granted to American journalists which had been denied to British journalists, and gave details. B. denied personal knowledge of these, and undertook that in future the rights of the British Press should be respected. He said this had always been his intention. He walked up and down the room a good deal during the interview, and gave me the impression that he had had a trying time.

10TH.—Golfed with L. G., the L.C.J., and Sir Charles Henry<sup>1</sup> at Swinley. The Chief told me that he did not share

<sup>1</sup> M.P. Wellington (Shropshire), 1906-18; d. 1919.

L. G.'s pessimistic views regarding the war, being of opinion that the Germans could not keep up the pace.

11TH.—Dined with L. G.. Found him very pre-occupied. He said that he had lunched with Max Aitken at his house, which is about three miles from Walton. Bonar Law was there. Bonar Law intends to resign unless L. G. is appointed Minister for War or he is appointed himself. L. G. is not disposed to take the office, and feels that the time has come when he can do greater service by resigning. He is very dissatisfied regarding the conduct of the war, and thinks the situation in France very serious. The French think so too. He has never seen Briand so despondent. (He has been here at a conference.) The French Government will probably fall, and in that case Joffre will be replaced by Castelnau and Pétain. L. G. ascribes the position at Verdun to the lack of big guns on the part of the French. He thinks our failures inexcusable, as we have men, guns, and ammunition. He considers that we have no brains at the top. He is very dissatisfied with Mr. A.. Bonar Law agrees that L. G. is the most suitable man to go to the War Office. If he does, Bonar Law will take over the Munitions. L. G. thinks perhaps it would be better to resign, to lead an Opposition. He said, "If I went out I should at once form a great Party organisation. I have promises of all the money necessary."

Shortly afterwards Max Aitken arrived. L. G. went to see him in another room, and after some time came to tell me that Aitken had come full of all sorts of things. I did not wait to hear what they were.

Yesterday L. G. spoke very nicely about Kitchener, but remarked that when the facts are published his reputation will not stand as high as it does now.

L. G. spoke at length concerning the state of Ireland. He says that the majority of the Nationalists are now in sympathy with the Sinn Feiners.

15TH.—L. G., Robertson Nicoll, and Dr. Addison to dine at Queen Anne's Gate at L. G.'s suggestion, so that he might discuss the desirability of accepting the position of Secretary for War. This afternoon I had an interview with Brade, who told me that he feared trouble if any attempt were made to curtail Robertson's powers. He said the Army would support

R.. Brade said L. G. had cracked many a tough nut, but would probably find the W.O. a tougher nut than any he had yet tackled and might break his teeth as others had done before him. The position was rendered all the more difficult by reason of the powers conferred upon Robertson by the Order in Council. Brade thinks R. will cling tenaciously to these.

At dinner the conversation turned on the Catholic Apostolic Church, which I mentioned to L. G. last Saturday in connection with the Duke of Northumberland. He asked for more information, never having heard of this community. Nicoll gave an interesting dissertation on the subject.

After dinner L. G. said, "At the risk of appearing egotistical, I now wish to discuss a matter of great importance. I have been offered the position of Secretary for War by the Prime Minister. I have not accepted, as there are important questions which must first be decided. It was arranged before he left for Scotland that during his absence we should both think the matter over. My decision may have a marked effect upon the result and duration of the war. I saw Northcliffe yesterday, when he said that if I accept I shall give the Government a new lease of life and that it will be impossible to turn them out. I also saw Carson, who said that he would be glad in one way if I came out. He would like to work with me, and that together we might bring the Government down and replace it by a sounder and more energetic body. He, however, thought that I could render more useful service by going to the War Office, but that I must stipulate for full powers. I place great reliance upon Carson's judgment. He goes to the heart of things. It was his judgment which made him such a success at the Bar. My own inclination would be to resign. The Munitions Department is now in full swing, so that my mind would be easy on that score. The war is being sadly muddled. There is no cohesion amongst the Allies. They have no definite plans and they have no proper military conferences. The Russians have made a forward movement in response to a cry for help from Italy, and well they are doing. But there was no concerted plan of action. We want more mutual assistance. If one army, for example, is thought the best to perform an operation requiring big guns and they have

no big guns, while another army has guns which it is not using, arrangements should be made for the necessary loan. At present we have no such arrangements. My intention was to resign, but owing to Kitchener's death another alternative has presented itself, and the question is whether I should adopt it. In short, the question is whether I am in or out?"

NICOLL: Mr. Minister, I think your position quite clear. You must accept the offer. Do not haggle about powers; you will later on get all the powers you want. Your appointment to the War Office will hearten the country and the Allies. The nation and the Army regard you as the only man capable of filling the position. If you refuse, you will occasion consternation and dismay. I implore you to accept the P.M.'s offer.

ADDISON: I agree with much that Sir William Robertson Nicoll has said, but I think you would place yourself in a false position if you did not stipulate for full powers. You would be hampered at every hand. You will not be able to procure information unless you have full powers. Soldiers always observe discipline. They will not give you information except through the proper channels; they will only give it if you are entitled directly to ask for it.

R.: It will be a difficult task. I am told the soldiers will oppose any change in the arrangements.

L. G.: That is what Brade says. He knows. He is a level-headed fellow.

R.: Now is the time to get a proper definition of your powers; it will be more difficult later on. The P.M. cannot afford to let you go. He would rather risk a row with Robertson than see you resign and go into Opposition. I think you should accept, but stipulate for the powers which have always been attached to the office.

L. G.: The P.M. will not mind a row with Robertson if someone else is to do the unpleasant work. If the P.M. gives me the powers, I can negotiate with Robertson if I have them in my pocket. I think I can show him that I can improve his position. He has no powers of expression; he does not shine in conference. He wants time to think; he does not possess a quick, ready mind. He always wants time for reflection; then he produces something good. I should be able to press for con-

ferences between the Allies, and I could place Robertson's case before the conference.

NICOLL: I agree that you must have powers, but I am anxious that you should not press for too much, or insist upon a too precise delimitation of your powers.

R.: The trouble is the repeal of the Order in Council. That is a definite matter. When powers have been publicly conferred upon a man, he resents having them rescinded.

L. G.: Quite true. The question is, how to save Robertson's face. In practice there would be no difficulty. We should work well together and I think we should make a strong combination.

NICOLL: Resignation would be a public disaster.

L. G.: If I do not take the office, Bonar Law thinks he is entitled to it, but he considers I am the best man for it. If I resign, I think he would follow suit. The Government would then break up. I, however, think it is my duty to take the office, subject to my having reasonable powers. I shall see the P.M. on his return.

We then talked of matters connected with the Munitions and L. G. rose to go, saying, "Well, now that I have received my marching orders, I will say good night and go home to bed."

16TH.—Called upon Brade and told him I thought L. G. would accept the office subject to having reasonable powers. Brade said that Robertson was very obdurate and that he (Brade) had no authority from L. G. to discuss the matter with him.

I went into K.'s room, which looked very bare and empty without him.

18TH.—Brade came to see me at Walton. He has had a long conference with Robertson, who is very stiff about his powers. L. G. telephoned to Brade, asking him to go and see him this afternoon. Brade wanted a talk beforehand. I said all seemed to turn upon the Order in Council. What are Robertson's powers, and are they such as to make L. G. feel that he cannot accept the position unless they are modified? Brade replied that the Order in Council did not say much. I pointed out that if the powers were unimportant it was not worth

worrying about them, whereas if they were important it would be difficult to contend that a civilian secretary should be invested with powers that had been taken from a great soldier like K., and this with L. G.'s approval. Brade then went to see L. G., and returned after about an hour and a half saying he had had a long talk with L. G. but could not understand whether he wanted the position or not.

L. G. telephoned to me to dine with him, which I did. We sat in his garden till after ten—a cold form of entertainment which does not appeal to me, but I sacrificed myself on the national altar, fortified by a fur coat. L. G. very insistent that he could hear the guns in France. Every few minutes he stopped the conversation so that we might listen. Mrs. L. G. said that she too could hear the guns.

I asked L. G. if he had seen the P.M., and he said, "No, not yet."

I referred to a leader in yesterday's *Daily Chronicle*, in which the writer emphasised the importance of making no change in the War Office arrangements, and said that any such change would be resented by the Army.

L. G.: The article is most harmful; it will prejudice the negotiations with Robertson. When one is negotiating, one often asks more than one is prepared to accept. The publication at a critical moment in the negotiations of an article which urges that the other party should grant nothing is most prejudicial. And then it is by no means certain that I shall go to the War Office. Some time before Kitchener's death, the question arose as to votes for soldiers. I am in favour of soldiers having votes. The P.M. is strongly opposed to it. He thinks that the men who are fighting for their country should have no voice in selecting the rulers who are to send them to risk their lives. I think that a monstrous proposition. I may go out on that question. It would be a proper question on which to resign.

R.: I see considerable difficulty in getting Robertson to acquiesce in the revocation of the Order in Council. When powers have been publicly conferred, the recipient resents their public withdrawal. Robertson can well say that arrangements which were deemed necessary, and which you deemed necessary, when the Secretary for War was a great soldier, are a



*fortiori* in the case of a civilian secretary, however distinguished. Further, I am told that the Order does not say much. Of course it all depends upon what the Order means, and upon how it has been interpreted.

L. G. : Yes. It would be difficult to revoke the Order. The question is, as you say, what does it imply? I am told that, as a matter of practice, Kitchener had abdicated all his powers to Robertson. I do not wish to interfere in military operations—that would be absurd—but I must control the administrative departments. That is a *sine qua non*. Otherwise I should be a mere figurehead.

L. G. seemed doubtful regarding the Irish settlement. To-night he had a telegram from his man, Owen, in Dublin, saying that the position is easier this evening. This he telephoned to T. P. O'Connor, who has taken a house at Walton for the summer.

T. P. told me he had found a new Ireland. A strange confession. There is no doubt that the power of the old Irish Party is on the wane, and they know it.

22ND.—Called to see L. G. at the Munitions Department. Found him still very angry with the *Daily Chronicle*.

23RD.—Saw Brade at the War Office. He says it is now fairly certain that L. G. will be the new War Minister. Brade is preparing a memorandum as to the working of the Office. Brade said he really could not understand whether the P.M. wanted L. G. to go to the War Office. Mr. A. is such a cute old boy that it is often impossible to say what he really means.

24TH.—L. G. asked me to dinner, but I was unable to go. I went after dinner. I told him I had invited Brade for tomorrow. We talked of the War Office. I urged him to accept, and said that questions as to the limitation of his authority would readily adjust themselves. He agreed, and also that it would be impossible to revoke or alter the Order in Council. He said, however, that he must have a definite understanding on certain points. He must have the power to recommend for promotion, otherwise his position would be weakened. The power to promote or to recommend for promotion is the real strength. Haig had written saying that he assumed L. G. was going to become War Minister and offering him his good

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offices. I said, "Acceptance of office is far better than resignation, but of course the effect will be to continue the Government."

L. G.: Yes, that is what I regret.

R.: Does the P.M. want you to go to the War Office?

L. G.: Yes, I think he has come to the conclusion that it is inevitable.<sup>1</sup>

30TH.—To lunch with Brade. He says Derby is going to be Under-Secretary and President of the Council. Brade hopes that the scheme will work well. He thinks that if L. G. and Derby pull together they will make a strong combination.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lloyd George was appointed Secretary for War shortly afterwards.

## Chapter XXVII

*A message from the Front—Churchill defends his record—Irish settlement difficulties—Lloyd George suggests Carson as leader of a new party.*

JULY 1ST, 1916.—Dined with T. P. O'Connor at his house at Walton Heath. L. G., Mrs. L. G., and Olwen of the party—also Joe Devlin and some other Irishmen. Devlin is a charming little man. Both he and L. G. looked very weary. T. P. told me that Robert Cecil<sup>1</sup> and Lansdowne have made impossible proposals in connection with the settlement and that while he (T. P.) thought the scheme would go through, the prospects were by no means clear.

2ND (SUNDAY).—Lunched with Max Aitken at Cherkley Court. Found Winston there painting a landscape. He at once wanted my opinion of the great offensive which started three days ago on the Western Front. The first *communiqué* was published this morning. I said I thought the result must be to relieve the pressure on Verdun. He replied that he thought the progress very disappointing. He spoke in depreciatory terms of Haig and our generals. I said, referring to his painting, "You seem very keen on art." To which he answered, "Well, a poor devil without a job must do something to occupy his mind." He talked of nothing but the war. After lunch he went off in my car to visit L. G. at Walton, leaving me with our host and Brade, who was staying with him. Aitken is good company, very natural and unaffected. Later I went to dine with L. G., whom I found in a state of excitement awaiting the arrival of an officer from the Front bearing dispatches as to the munitions. We dined in the loggia. About 9 o'clock the officer arrived in a motor, having come straight from the battlefield. He saluted and at once unpacked his documents, plans, and photographs, which we examined with great eagerness. L. G. read out the general's comments on the

<sup>1</sup> Now Viscount Cecil.

performances of the various classes of guns and ammunition, interjecting observations of his own. The report was considered satisfactory and the officer then had his dinner, during which he gave a vivid account of the bombardment. L. G. is firmly convinced that he can hear the guns when he is seated in the loggia. The officer (Major Falls) thinks that as the guns are being fired on chalk strata and as L. G.'s house is on chalk, the sound may be carried through earth tremors. This theory pleased L. G. immensely. During the evening he continually remarked, "The firing is very heavy; the bombardment must be terrific."

Neither Major Falls nor I could hear anything. L. G. made anxious inquiries as to our stores of ammunition, but no details of the amount consumed were yet forthcoming. The casualties are heavy (27,000 men and officers), but the secret dispatches indicate that on the whole we have done fairly well, particularly in one area. L. G. wanted to know the name of the general who had been so successful, but Major Falls did not know. L. G. remarked that he would promote this general, who was evidently an able man. Winston was with L. G. for five hours. L. G. said he thought Winston would be the best man to succeed him at the Munitions Department, but that the P.M. would not appoint him.

7TH.—Lunched with Winston and Mrs. C. at 41 Cromwell Road. Long talk extending over three hours. Winston said, "Asquith has treated me badly. He has not defended me as he should have done. He shared the responsibility for all that was done, but beyond a general statement that he accepted responsibility—a statement which was calculated to show how magnanimous he is—he never made any case in my favour. I have a complete documentary defence. When the documents are published my position in the country will be very different. I have demanded publication, and the Government have promised that the documents shall be published. But publication is delayed and I am beginning to doubt if the pledge will be kept. However, I am writing to the P.M. to demand an immediate fulfilment of his pledge. Here is the letter. Read it." (The letter reminded "My dear Prime Minister" of his pledge and concluded by saying, "Unless you see any reason to the

contrary, I propose to put a series of questions on the subject in the House of Commons.") "What do you think of it?"

R.: The concluding paragraph looks menacing.

WINSTON: Yes, it is intended to be. But I say, "Unless you see any reason to the contrary." If he means to fulfil his promise, that will be a reason. The letter is all right.

R.: What happened regarding the Munitions Department? L. G. spoke very strongly in favour of your succeeding him.

WINSTON: Yes, both he and Bonar Law thought I should go. I did not want to join this Government, but felt that I could have rendered useful service in that capacity. The P.M., however, would not hear of it, and I am no suppliant for office. The Government is rotten to the core. It is full of personal jealousies and intrigues. Take L. G.'s appointment as War Minister. He has been appointed in direct opposition to the expressed views of Asquith and Balfour. Sir Edward Grey told me that he was strongly opposed to it. In the conduct of the war the Government takes no step demanding initiative or invention. They have engaged in the offensive on the West because they can justify the proceeding by saying we were compelled to act as we did. The Russian successes are a piece of good luck; they are not due to any settled plan of action.

R.: So far as concerns your case, the Gallipoli catastrophe seems to have been due to the delay of the War Office in sending reinforcements. Did you press for these and point out the dangers of delay?

WINSTON: Yes, there are the letters [handing me a file containing official memoranda and correspondence with Kitchener. In the letters Winston continually pressed K. to send troops. This was in March 1915]. Everything is in writing. On September 1st, 1914, I wrote pointing out the immediate desirability of attacking Turkey and describing a plan of action. Nothing was done, although I kept pressing the point. My naval plan was due to K.'s failure to move. The whole scheme was carefully prepared, and assented to by Fisher and Jackson, the present First Lord. Jackson himself drew up the plan. Here it is [producing it for me to read]. Had we gone on we should have forced the Dardanelles. The Turks had no ammunition left. However, when we embarked on the

land operations and the reinforcements were not forthcoming, I strongly protested and registered my protest at the War Council. It is recorded on the minutes. I disclaimed all responsibility. Ian Hamilton's demands for troops were disregarded, although plenty were available. My plans were daring and they required to be carried out in an efficient and complete way. As it was, I was powerless. The result was to rob the nation of what would have been one of the most brilliant military exploits in the history of the country. My personal relations with Fisher were always most friendly. [I (R.) wonder! But did not say so.] When I proposed to renew the naval attack on the Dardanelles, Fisher became frightened. He feared that I should over-persuade him. He acted very badly. He cannot be trusted, but he is a man of genius. He can only work for three or four hours, but he is full of ideas and his three or four hours are worth more than other people's full time.

R.: Do you think the Jutland battle a success? Did Beatty<sup>1</sup> do the right thing?

WINSTON: Yes, it was a brilliant affair—worthy of the best traditions of the Navy. The public do not understand naval warfare. They criticise naval losses more severely than military losses. The loss of a ship is regarded as a crime. The public do not appreciate that you cannot fight naval battles without loss, any more than you can fight military engagements without loss.

R.: What do you propose to do?

WINSTON: I shall write to earn my living and I shall go on painting. Painting has been a great solace; it helped me to tide over the horrible time after I left the Admiralty. [Here he showed me with pride a picture he had just finished.] But what I want is some position in which I can be of service—in which I can utilise my knowledge and experience. Asquith could readily have given me such a post. I might have taken over the Air. Had I done so twelve months ago, you would not have had the scandals which have exercised the public mind. Or I might have gone to Russia. I offered to go. Had I gone, I

<sup>1</sup> Admiral Beatty, now Earl Beatty; Commander 1st Battle Cruiser Squadron, 1912-16, Grand Fleet, 1916-1919.

could have gathered all necessary information and made a report which would have avoided much trouble and misunderstanding, but the Prime Minister would not give me the job. Read that [handing me an official report printed in July 1915, in which Winston described the naval and military situation and made certain suggestions. I only had time to read it hurriedly. It seemed a remarkably able document]. Everything I predicted has come true, and the historical portion can be proved by documentary evidence.

A visitor was announced, and I left. Winston can, I think, make a good case. Whether this is the time to reopen the question is another matter. The only object is to re-establish Winston's reputation. He remarked, "Although we are at war, there is no reason why injustice should be done to individuals." It is of course a terrible ordeal to be compelled to remain silent under such circumstances, but just now the public are not in the mood for post-mortems. Winston's method, accuracy, and knowledge of his subject are amazing. He knows where to find every paper and what every paper contains. He said that it would take him six hours to state his case in a speech. He admitted that since his retirement from the Government he had made some mistakes. He named two—the first his Fisher speech, and the second his retirement to France. I did not discuss the subject. He showed me some remarkable letters from Fisher which the latter would find it difficult to explain—letters written when they were working together, in which Fisher made most unfavourable comments on the Cabinet.

8TH.—Had tea with Franklin Bouillon, the French M.P.. McKenna joined us.

15TH.—Dined with L. G., who presided over the Army Council for the first time to-day. I showed him a new Army Order by which Area Commanders were directed to watch for men suitable for officers by reason of their education and "social standing." He was surprised, and said that it should not have been issued. I also showed the Order to Brade, who agreed that it should not have been issued and said that he had never seen it, although it bore his signature, placed there by one of his assistants. This is not surprising considering the

enormous number of instructions issued by the W.O. under Brade's name as Secretary. L. G. said he had dined with Lord French at his house in Lancaster Gate. French had criticised the arrangements for our advance in France. He said the movement had been too freely advertised and too rigidly prepared. L. G. appeared to agree. I said it might be that French was jealous of Haig.

16TH.—Dined with L. G.. After dinner we walked in the garden for an hour and a half.

I inquired the position of the Irish question.

L. G.: Serious and awkward. Bonar Law is very anxious. He says his people won't have Home Rule.

Evidently the party meeting was very difficult. L. G. told Bonar Law that the Conservative Party do not love him (B. L.) and that he is in the same position as Disraeli. The Conservatives never wholly adopted Dizzy until they were forced to do so. Balfour told L. G. that they kept Palmerston in to keep Dizzy out. L. G. said to Bonar Law that if he, Carson, and L. G. stood together, they could pull the thing (Home Rule) through. Bonar Law replied that the position is very serious, as opposition to Home Rule is one of the Party principles.

R.: How will it work out? You will bring in the Bill?

L. G.: Yes, the Cabinet have agreed to that. The difficulty is that it will be debated at length. All sorts of amendments, some of them apparently innocuous, will be proposed. For example, That the new Government shall maintain law and order in Ireland. It looks innocent, but the object is to start the new Government in a straight-jacket; to entangle it in barbed wire. However, I have pledged my word to the Irish, and if the pledge is not fulfilled, I shall have to resign. There are certain pledges which leave the person who makes them no alternative. This is one of them. The whole position is most serious and embarrassing in view of the military situation. A break-up of the Cabinet just now would be a misfortune.

R.: Victories will carry them through.

L. G.: Yes, but the casualties may shock the nation when they appreciate the small results.

R.: I think the nation is prepared for heavy losses.



L. G.: Verdun is the danger-spot. If it falls, the Germans can move their 2,000 guns on to our front. The French are outclassed in artillery; they have not got the guns. Whether they can hold out remains to be seen. Thomas, who was here last week, is evidently anxious. The Government were nearly thrown out in the secret session on the question of artillery provision; they only escaped by saying that new guns had been ordered and that we have promised to send them guns. The latter statement is not true. We have promised so many guns at the beginning of the year, but whether the Russians or French are to have them is a matter which the Conference will have to decide.

R.: We are well off for guns, thanks to you.

L. G.: They are coming in steadily, but the making of big guns is a slow process. By the way, poor old Kitchener told the Members of Parliament a regular howler about the big guns. He said the War Office had seen the necessity and had ordered what were essential. When I [L. G.] went to the War Office I sent for the papers, from which I discovered that he had ordered only 150 big guns. This order was increased to 1,100 on the earnest representation of General French and by me to 2,000, notwithstanding the opposition of the War Office and Treasury. K. was a most surprising old boy.

R.: Yet now and again he had vision concerning big things.

L. G.: Yes, I think my lighthouse analogy best describes him. A great flash of light across the ocean, and then absolute darkness with no warning as to how long it would continue.

At dinner L. G. said, "Bonar Law tells me that his people hate Asquith. I wonder why?" Colonel David Davies, one of L. G.'s secretaries, replied, "Because they cannot get him out."

L. G.: Yes, when the smoke of a crisis clears away, there he is, still perched on the wall at Downing Street. I suppose that annoys the Tories.

After we came in from our walk, L. G. called for a Welsh hymn, which he sang with great fervour, remarking that he had sung it as a boy. He then told a pretty little story. Thirty-five years ago he was secretary at an Eisteddfod at Criccieth. A young professional singer named Savage came there to sing—

a fine performer who sang with brilliant enthusiasm. After the Eisteddfod, Savage went to L. G.'s home for tea, and unsolicited sang to L. G.'s mother, who was an invalid, suffering from asthma, not only the whole of his parts in the programme, but also all his encores. L. G. said, "I loved him for his kindness, which I have never forgotten. To-day in a Welsh paper I saw that Professor Savage is now living on the shores of the Pacific in California and that he is much loved and respected. I felt that I must write a letter to the Welsh paper telling the story."

19TH.—Long talk with Brade regarding newspaper correspondents at G.H.Q. in France. Each paper now wants its own correspondent, in lieu of the present grouping arrangement. Brade thinks the military authorities will raise difficulties.

He says that L. G. and Robertson are getting on well together. Also that the Russians are doubtful about Montagu and wish the supply of Russian munitions to remain with the War Office. Kitchener insisted on this when the Ministry of Munitions was formed. He thought he could deal better with the Russians than anyone else. On his death the W.O. proposed to turn the work over to the Ministry. Now, in view of the Russian desire, Brade has suggested that L. G. should retain the work. A number of generals have been recalled.

20TH.—F. E. Smith, the Attorney-General, made some caustic remarks to me concerning Mr. A.. F. E. considers Montagu's appointment as Minister of Munitions most unfortunate.

21ST.—At the W.O. met Winston waiting to see L. G.. Winston suggested I should drive home and have tea with him. He told me that the news from the Front in France was very good—the best for some time past. In twenty-four hours we have made more progress than in ten days. The Cabinet have decided not to publish the Dardanelles papers. Winston says they have drawn back from their undertaking on the ground that publication will be harmful to the public interest. Winston is very depressed. He says it is hard that he should have to remain under a stigma until after the war. The P.M. replied quite civilly to his letter. Winston intends to raise the question

in the House of Commons. He says the Irish question may wreck the Government, but they will be helped by victories in the field. That is really all that matters. Winston looked very dejected. He was going to Blenheim and was busy giving orders about his painting tackle. I said to him, "You have had a wonderful life. You are only forty-three. Think what you have done!" "Yes," he replied, "that is all very well, but my life is finished. I only care about the war and I am banished from the scene of action." Evidently he means to go for the P.M.. Winston's future is interesting. Much depends on the public view of the Dardanelles papers when published. To-day I said to Creedy, K.'s bland private secretary, who has a perfect bedside manner, "Have you seen Winston's dossier? He makes a strong case." Creedy replied, "Yes, but there are documents which will have to be added. And documents do not convey the whole story." From this it is plain that the Kitchener school do not intend to take Winston's attack lying down.

Long talk with Masterton Smith<sup>1</sup> at the Admiralty. He was secretary to McKenna and Winston, and occupies the same position with Arthur Balfour. He therefore knows all the Admiralty secrets and has taken a leading part in the management of Admiralty affairs for several years past. Yesterday Asquith announced appointment of Committee to investigate the Dardanelles and Mesopotamia campaigns. When I arrived, Masterton Smith was busy collecting papers for the former inquiry. Masterton Smith thinks Winston may come fairly well out of the inquiry on the papers, but, with one or two exceptions, the Minutes of the War Council, if produced, will be prejudicial to his case. The War Council intended that the Fleet should endeavour to force the Dardanelles, but that very little should be said publicly, and that if the operation proved unsuccessful, it should be treated as a feint and the real objective described as Alexandretta. Winston's *communiqués* to the Press wittingly or unwittingly obscured this programme. The attack came to be regarded as the sole operation. When it failed, the Cabinet had not the courage to cut their loss. They then proceeded with a military operation which, from the intrinsic difficulties which always attend a joint naval and

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir James Masterton Smith.

military operation, was bound to fail when conducted jointly by two such conflicting and diverse personalities as Winston and Kitchener. Two men of mediocre talents might have succeeded, or either Winston or K. might have done so if solely responsible.

Met Walter Long in St. James's Park. We walked together. He says that the P.M. is terribly lacking in decision, and that it is strange that a man with such a great intellect should be so indecisive. Long considers that the present unfortunate position of the Irish question is due in a great measure to Mr. A.'s failure to bring in the Bill without delay. Long said he thought L. G. had been mistaken in not bringing the Ulstermen and Nationalists together, and implied that misunderstandings had resulted in consequence of separate negotiations. He described L. G. as a most attractive fellow and said that he had both the power of decision and the gift of speech. Long does not, however, always agree with his decisions!

This week a deputation representing the municipalities waited on McKenna to protest against the proposal to supplement naval and military pensions out of charitable instead of Government funds—the proposal which I successfully opposed at the National Relief Fund Committee. The Mayors extorted another £5,000,000!

30TH.—Dined with L. G., who says he thinks the war will certainly last until next June. He is, however, much more optimistic than he was, and spoke in glowing terms of the Russian victories. He asked my opinion of the result of a General Election in which the issue would be the more vigorous prosecution of the war; the new party to be headed by Carson, whom he described in eulogistic language. A man of resolution, good judgment, and inspiring personality.

R.: What line would you take in such a contest?

L. G.: I don't quite know, but I feel we cannot go on as we are doing.

R.: A clear-cut issue would be necessary. The question is a personal one. Who is to carry on the war?

L. G.: The Carson candidates would be prepared to support Bonar Law, Austen Chamberlain, and myself.

R.: But so would their opponents. The one party would support Mr. A. plus the other three, and the other party Sir Edward Carson plus the other three. The voters would be sadly confused.

Mrs. L. G.: If I were a voter I should not know how to vote. It would be a terrible muddle.

R.: The new people would have to make out a case. Post-mortem work would not suffice. The people think that victory is now within sight. The new party would have to prove mismanagement in regard to pending operations both civil and military.

L. G.: The position would be difficult, I agree, but I think that the nation would prefer Carson to Asquith. Mr. A. gets very few cheers nowadays. Unhappily, McKenna and I are in constant disagreement, which makes things difficult.

R.: Would you be willing to serve under Carson? You should be the alternative to Asquith.

L. G.: I should be glad and proud to serve under him. I think he would do well. My only purpose is to get on with the war.

## Chapter XXVIII

*Conditions behind the lines—Sir Eric Geddes and the soldiers—  
Talk with Mrs. Pankhurst—L. G.'s warning to neutrals—  
Conscription for Ireland.*

AUGUST 2ND, 1916.—Davies, L. G.'s secretary, tells me that he has seen a memorandum prepared by one of Mr. A.'s political friends regarding the vacancy at the War Office due to Kitchener's death. It was evidently written with the object of advising the P.M.. The memorandum stated that the vacant position was one of the highest importance in the eyes of the public; that before the war, L. G. was discredited and floundering in the morass of an ill-devised Budget; that the war had rehabilitated him; that he was now most popular, not only with the people but with the Allies; that it would therefore be impossible not to appoint him as Secretary for War; that the position was far less important than it was thought to be by the public; that L. G. would probably be engulfed by the machine, etc.. Davies kept no copy of this document.

9TH.—To breakfast with L. G. at Downing Street. Found him and Burnham walking together in the garden. L. G. explained that a statement Burnham had made to him regarding the offensive in the West had created a flutter in military circles. We then adjourned for breakfast. L. G. intimated that he had taken the line that the offensive should not be actively pursued now that we had achieved our object in diverting the Germans from Verdun. He told Burnham that he (B.) would have the satisfaction of knowing that he had helped to save thousands of lives. B. was obviously gratified, but also somewhat perturbed by the fear that the soldiers would be angered that he had expressed an opinion upon military affairs. L. G. remarked he thought both Robertson and Haig were in a measure relieved that the offensive was not to be actively continued until 1917, when our superiority in guns and ammunition would be more marked. L. G. then went on to comment on Northcliffe's

article in yesterday's *Times*, in which he described the condition of affairs behind the lines as being "perfect" and expressed the opinion that nothing should be changed. L. G. remarked, "He is all wrong this time. Things behind the lines require to be vastly improved. The transit arrangements are very bad. We rely too much on motor lorries; we should have more light railways and should make more use of the canals. We are using too much petrol and too many men. I am pressing for a change."

Burnham then left to attend a funeral. Colonel Lee shortly afterwards arrived, looking pale and anxious. He brought with him two letters from Northcliffe, dated from Paris. L. G. read them. He said, "N. is all wrong."

L. G. goes to Paris to-morrow. He asked Lee to write to Northcliffe requesting him to call to see him. L. G. said, "I must put him straight." Brade tells me that L. G. has instructed Geddes of the Munitions, and formerly of the North-Eastern Railway Co., to go to France to report on railway facilities. He has been lent by the Munitions for the purpose. Brade thinks L. G. should go to G.H.Q. to see Haig and his staff with the object of explaining his intentions and conciliating them. L. G. said this morning that he would not go to G.H.Q. on this trip. He made some caustic comments on the soldiers' rooted objection to avail themselves of civilian assistance.

SEPTEMBER 4TH, 1916.—Called at War Office to see L. G.. While I was waiting, Mrs. Pankhurst<sup>1</sup> arrived. L. G. came out to get a paper and took the opportunity to introduce me to Mrs. P., who was accompanied by Sir J. Murray, before the war the universal bailer out of Suffragettes. L. G. laughingly said to Mrs. P., "You must try to convert him" (pointing to me). Mrs. P. smiled but seemed rather uneasy, remembering she had been convicted and imprisoned for inciting her people to destroy the house I had built for Lloyd George at Walton Heath. I said, "Mrs. Pankhurst, I am honoured to meet you. I have always admired your wonderful speaking. You made one of the best legal speeches on record when you were tried at the Old Bailey; I have been told so by several distinguished

<sup>1</sup> The Women's Suffrage leader; d. 1928.

lawyers who heard you. You and I have a close association. Unwittingly you caused my house to be blown up and unwittingly I caused you to be imprisoned."

Mrs. P. (blushing faintly at my compliment): I did not know it was to be your house that would be destroyed. Those days are all over now. I am very sorry if I did you any wrong. I hope the house was well insured.

R.: As a matter of fact the insurance company would not pay, but that does not matter. In those days the blowing up of Lloyd George's house was an event of importance; to-day the blowing up of a whole town counts for nothing. But I ought to tell you, Mrs. Pankhurst, that you were convicted by the evidence of a reporter of the *Western Mail* (of which I was then Chairman) who had reported an inflammatory speech delivered by you at Cardiff, which resulted in the charge of inciting to the destruction of property.

Mrs. P.: What a strange coincidence! Now we can forgive each other, can't we?

R.: I have nothing to forgive.

Mrs. P.: You referred to my powers as a speaker. Speaking is quite easy if you have something to say, and if you feel strongly. Enthusiasm is the speaker's mainspring.

We parted with mutual expressions of goodwill.

I found L. G. looking white and feeble. He said he was dreading the voyage over the Channel which had to be taken that afternoon, and that he wanted a holiday. He suggested that I should join him in France if he could get a few days off, and promised to telegraph. His old uncle is breaking up, which worries him. When I arrived I found him writing a letter to the old man. L. G. still writes a line to him every day. He thinks things are looking better, but that there is danger on the Eastern Front.

After leaving L. G., called to see Brade, from whom I hear that the dispute regarding the transport question has been adjusted. Geddes is now in France and the soldiers are working with him satisfactorily. Brade remarked, "What promised to be an awkward situation has been smoothed over by a little tact and management."

19TH.—L. G. back from France, where he has been for



nearly a fortnight. I called to see him at the War Office. He was just off to Windsor to see the King, and asked me to go with him. We drove down in the War Office car. L. G. looks tired, and says that he wants to sleep for twenty-four hours on end. L. G. gave a vivid account of his French trip. The dinner in the cavern below the citadel at Verdun was one of the most impressive things he had witnessed. L. G. says that when the toast was drunk he could see tears trickling down the faces of many of the men. He is enthusiastic about our guns, and expressed his satisfaction that Joffre had come to him to ask for the loan of some of them. L. G. had a conference with Joffre, Haig, and Cavan<sup>1</sup> in a small hut which Cavan uses for his conferences. The noise of the guns was deafening. L. G. was able to settle some important questions, including long guns versus short guns. As before he was much impressed by the advice of Colonel Walsh, a French gunner, the man who advised some time ago that more big guns should be ordered. L. G. took his advice, but the French did not. Walsh proved to be right, and the French suffered at Verdun accordingly.

In speaking of the disregard for human life bred by the war, L. G. mentioned that Walsh wanted to show him some big guns. When the party arrived, the guns had finished their day's work. Walsh telephoned to the General Commanding and asked him to permit a few shots to be fired. Two huge shells were then discharged at a village some ten miles away. L. G. begged that no more firing should take place, as each shell would no doubt kill or injure several people who might or might not be Germans. Walsh replied, "Well, we are shelling this village just now anyway. If we do not shell it to-day, we shall do so to-morrow." L. G. said, "I would not like to feel that the accident of my visit had led to exceptional operations."

L. G. thinks we are doing well, but that the war may last for a considerable time. The public know only half the story. They read of the victories; the cost is concealed. I asked if there were not two alternative policies, (1) a rapid advance with great losses, and (2) a slower movement with smaller

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Cavan, commanding the Guards Division.

losses. His answer was in the affirmative. He favours No. 2. I inquired how he had settled the dispute concerning Geddes.

L. G.: Quite satisfactorily. But it looked as if there were going to be a big row. Pressure was brought to bear upon me on all hands. Northcliffe wrote that I was making myself very unpopular, etc.. I was, however, convinced I was right. I knew that the transport required reorganisation, and that Geddes was the man for the job because of his technical knowledge. I felt sure the House of Commons would support me if there were a row. I saw Haig and told him I did not want to interfere with him, but was certain I was right. Now he thinks there is nobody like Geddes, and is carrying out his recommendations.

We reached Windsor at 3. I went to the hotel and L. G. to the Castle, where he remained for about an hour.

20TH.—Dined with L. G. Three of his secretaries there. Much talk again about the defects of the War Office. But we spent the greater part of the evening in singing Welsh hymns and later old songs such as "Come into the garden, Maud." "Cockles and Mussels," etc.. L. G. in great form. He has brought back several amusing stories, one about General Congreve and a carrier pigeon. The General insisted on personally examining the message brought by the bird. This is what he read, "Look 'ere, Bill, I'm pretty well fed up with looking after this b——y bird."

L. G. very tired. Wants me to go to Brighton with him.

21ST TO 25TH.—L. G., Mrs. L. G., Megan, Davies the secretary, and I motored to Brighton, where we spent Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. L. G. very active all the time. On Friday and Saturday we golfed in the morning. Friday afternoon was spent at Newhaven, where L. G. inspected the Army shipping arrangements. On Saturday afternoon he inspected troops, and on Sunday motored to Sandwich (ninety miles) to inspect the new harbour. Not a restful time, but the holiday did us all good. I went my own way and did not join the inspecting parties. Brade came down on Friday and spent the night. He says L. G.'s position with the soldiers is rather ticklish.

OCTOBER 1ST, 1916.—Dined with L. G. at Walton. On

Thursday the *Morning Post* published an attack on him for interfering with the military. On Friday appeared L. G.'s remarkable interview with an American journalist, in which he warned neutrals against interference. It has created an enormous sensation.

R.: Well, you have had a great week. The interview is one of the best things you have done. It was splendid—like molten lava.

L. G.: I am glad it pleased you. It was all due to you. Brighton did it. Had you not taken me away I should not have produced it.

R.: Not only did the interview achieve the main purpose, but it blew your enemies sky-high.

L. G.: The article in the *Morning Post* was an ill-conditioned thing. If it comes to the point I shall tell the country that when in France I tried to minimise the loss of our brave boys. I inquired how it was that the French achieve more than we do with fewer casualties. I suppose this is what the *Morning Post* referred to. I have had numerous letters from soldiers' relatives thanking me for the interview. That shows the feeling of the country.

R.: Did the Foreign Office arrange the interview?

L. G.: No, they had nothing to do with it. The American journalist came to see me. I said I would not give him an interview then, but I began to talk. When I had finished he said, "I wish someone had been behind that map with a notebook!" He went away and wrote out what I had said. He showed it to Northcliffe, who sent a message saying he wished I would allow the thing to be published. I asked to see it, and, after revising it, agreed to allow it to appear. Grey doubted, but Hardinge<sup>1</sup> was delighted. He nearly embraced me.

R.: How is the Geddes controversy proceeding?

L. G.: In an amazing manner. Haig has made him a Lieutenant-General; he says Geddes cannot maintain his position unless he has equal rank with the Director of Movements. Geddes reported that congestion would probably arise at the central depot and that some day it would be impossible to get the ammunition to the front. What he predicted happened.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Hardinge, Viceroy of India, 1910-16.

Haig was enormously impressed. He sent for Geddes and told him his report had been only too quickly verified. Geddes said he was surprised it had happened so soon. The matter was of course vital. Geddes returned from France in a state of amazement. Luckily I took no notice of Northcliffe's protests; I just went straight forward. Haig showed himself a big man; he saw he was wrong, and at once admitted it and acted accordingly. He is a fine fellow. By the way, I had an amusing talk with the man who is showing the Cabinet films. He said (of course he would to me) that I am the most popular figure, but he gave me the name of the next one, and who do you think it is?

R.: Grey!

L. G.: Right! But why?

R.: The public believe in him. They think he is in politics only because he deems it to be his duty, and that he would be glad to go if he could with justice to the country.

L. G.: And they are right in the main. If you had to govern this country by a Committee of Six, three from either side, whom would you choose from our side?

R.: You, Asquith, and Grey.

L. G.: So should I. On the other side I would choose Balfour, Carson, and I think Curzon. I am disappointed with Bonar. A man said a clever thing to me the other day concerning Balfour. "He is a good man to show you the cross-roads, but never tells you which turning to take." Isn't that good?

R.: Why Curzon? Is he valuable?

L. G.: Yes, he is. He has travelled a lot; he knows about the countries of the world. He has read a lot; he is full of knowledge which none of us possesses. He is useful in council. He is not a good executant and has no tact, but he is valuable for the reasons stated.

Mrs. L. G. here joined in the conversation. "Have you heard that we are closing Downing Street?" (I had, but did not say so.)

L. G.: Yes, we can't afford it. My income has been reduced by the arrangement we made<sup>1</sup> to about £4,000. Income-tax

<sup>1</sup> An arrangement to pool Cabinet Ministers' salaries.

reduced it to £2,800, and of this £800 has, in accordance with the arrangement, to be invested in War Loan. We shall live at Walton and economise.

R.: Is it true that Monro<sup>1</sup> is going to India to succeed Duff<sup>2</sup> as Commander-in-Chief?

L. G.: Yes, he has gone already, but his position has not yet been defined.

5TH.—Breakfasted with Colonel David Davies, M.P., by arrangement, so that L. G. might meet Burnham of the *Daily Telegraph*. L. G. deprecated the article in yesterday's *Times* advocating military compulsion for Ireland. He said, "When I was at the front I wanted to know why our losses are so much greater than those of the French. If we proceed at the present rate, we must make demands upon the nation which will seriously cripple our trade—or Ireland must contribute her proper quota. If conscription for Ireland is properly handled, I don't think there will be any real trouble. But to return to the military question. My view is that at the present time we should strongly develop our artillery attacks, but never risk men unless we can take positions with light losses. They say that is a question for the soldiers alone. I don't agree. The whole situation must be reviewed. The soldier says, 'It is our province to do the fighting; it is yours to supply the men.' That is not my opinion. Furthermore, if the policy requires defence in Parliament or the country, I shall have to defend it."

R.: Is it not a matter for the War Council?

L. G.: Yes, but the position is difficult. It is almost impossible to discuss the question with the P.M. since Raymond Asquith's death. You can see how it hurts him. Of course we have discussed the matter, but we have not come to any definite conclusion. The war will last, I fear, until 1918, and later on we may have to sacrifice our trade, but I think the time has not yet arrived.

7TH.—Played golf at Walton with L. G.; the first time for several months, I think. He says he believes his recent interview was none too soon and that there has been "peace talk."

<sup>1</sup> General Sir Charles Monro, C.-in-C. India, 1916-20; d. 1929.

<sup>2</sup> General Sir Beauchamp Duff, C.-in-C. India, 1913-16; d. 1918.

Also that Asquith and some of his associates are in it. L. G. thinks it noticeable that the *Spectator* did not applaud the interview, and suggests Strachey is under the influence of the P.M. and represents his views. I rather pressed for more information as to the reasons for his belief, but got nothing further. His suspicions may have led him to attach too much importance to minor manifestations which really signify nothing more than an attitude of mind on the part of the aforesaid colleagues. T. P. O'Connor arrived with his two satellites this afternoon, of course with the object of interviewing L. G., who declined to come to dinner to meet them. They are violent and emphatic against conscription for Ireland. T. P. prophesies bloodshed at every cottage door, but admits that logically there is no reply to the demand for more men from Ireland.

8TH.—Dined with L. G. at Walton. Sir Vincent Evans<sup>1</sup> and Colonel David Davies there also. L. G. told with great glee of his meeting with Mr. Hedges, of Hedges & Butler, at Rheims. One of the partners has visited Rheims every year from time immemorial. This old boy has continued the practice notwithstanding that the town is continually bombarded by the Germans. He insisted on entertaining L. G., who inquired whether the Germans had yet done their daily bombing. Mr. H. said, "No, not to-day."

L. G.: When are they likely to commence?

Mr. H.: They are very uncertain; they may begin any time. Do you take milk with your coffee, Mr. Lloyd George?

L. G. said that General Foch told him that French wine fought for its country at the Battle of the Marne. Thousands of Germans were mad drunk.

More talk of Irish conscription. I inquired what he thought of Duke.<sup>2</sup>

L. G.: I think he is doing well. A steady, careful man.

R.: Is he in favour of conscription?

L. G.: Not at this stage. Nor do I think it practicable at this moment. Our party is an Irish party to a great extent; you must not forget that. I doubt if you could get the Bill

<sup>1</sup> Hon. Treasurer National Fund for Welsh Troops, 1915-19.

<sup>2</sup> Now the Rt. Hon. Lord Merrivale, Chief Secretary for Ireland, 1916-18.

through Parliament. The attitude of the Irish is selfish and indefensible.

14TH.—L. G., David Davies, and Brade lunched with me at the Carlton, after which I drove with L. G. to Walton. L. G. says Northcliffe is taking up a strong line against him and endeavouring to make friends with Asquith.

Referring to the rumours of difficulties at the War Office, L. G. said the soldiers' view is that it is his duty to find the men, but that after they have been thrown into the cauldron, he has no further responsibility. He added, "I believe that is not the nation's view. It is not mine, and it is a view I would never accept. I am entitled to inquire how it is that our casualties are so much heavier than those of the French. I am not entitled to say, 'You attacked So-and-so; why did you not attack So-and-so?' but I am entitled to consider the general conduct of the campaign. That is one of my duties."

29TH (SUNDAY).—L. G. says he is very apprehensive concerning the military position. He fears the Rumanians will be unable to hold the passes. He has not felt so gloomy since the early part of 1915. On September 2nd he feared disaster on the Rumanian Front and wrote a letter setting forth his views, which were not shared by the Army staff. What he predicted as being probable has unfortunately happened. He considers the British and French staffs are to blame. Asquith does not like the position. L. G. is doubtful of the wisdom of the advance on the Somme. The losses have been very serious. He is also doubtful about Joffre and thinks that Pétain and another French general, whose name I forget, take the correct view. L. G. says there is no truth in the rumour that he has meditated advising the recall of Haig. There is no one to replace him. L. G. strongly resents Northcliffe's attitude, and says he does not intend to allow him to dictate his policy. N. will not work with other people. L. G. has told the soldiers what his opinion is, but has not endeavoured to interfere with them. The responsibility rests with the staff, but L. G. is entitled to criticise their policy both as War Minister and as a member of the War Council. In his letter regarding Rumania, he pointed out that Hindenburg's plan would no doubt be to give way on the Western Front and to make a violent and sustained attack

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on Rumania. The staff took the view that Hindenburg had not got the men and that the passes were impregnable.

L. G.: Even the Almighty formed a Trinity. Northcliffe is a Unitarian. It is a poor sort of religion.

L. G. says he cannot rely on Northcliffe, and made the naïve remark that N.'s support is a doubtful asset for a Radical politician!



## Chapter XXIX

*Clashes between soldiers and politicians—The shadow of the Somme—Russian troubles—A War Cabinet plan—Asquith feeling the strain.*

NOVEMBER 1ST, 1916.—L. G. and Lord Burnham to breakfast. L. G. says that at the recent Conference at Boulogne there were grave differences between the French soldiers and the French politicians, due to a clash of opinion between the leading soldiers in France as to policy. Some most eminent generals are opposed to the continuance of an active advance on the Somme. They favour a vigorous bombardment, but deprecate incurring heavy casualties. In their opinion nothing definite can be achieved until the spring, when the Russians will be re-equipped. Meanwhile it is more or less a question of marking time. L. G. says our generals lack vision. They are able, industrious, brave, and thorough, but have no genius. The question of man-power is becoming very serious. Lord French thinks that before long it will be necessary to rely mainly upon volunteers for home defence. I (R.) urged that the German prisoners should be used for agricultural purposes and that they should be guarded by the volunteers instead of by soldiers, also that they should be housed in camps in suitable districts from which they could be drafted day by day in large squads to work upon neighbouring farms. L. G. thought this a good idea. He says that the agricultural machinery will have to be mobilised during the war, particularly steam ploughs, so as to make it available for the use of the farmers as a whole, the owners to have the pre-emptory right of user and to be paid for the use of their plant by others.

Much talk concerning opinion of General Staff as to function of Minister for War. L. G. elaborated the views already recorded. He says his personal relations with Robertson and the staff are quite friendly.

2ND.—Dined with Burnham at the Garrick Club. General

Robertson was there. He remarked more than once that we must remember that our enemies have their troubles of which we do not know, and that the night is often the blackest before dawn. A. J. B. made a very similar observation to me shortly after he went to the Admiralty.

3RD.—Brade sent for me hurriedly. He says that L. G. is furious that the Ministry of Munitions is engaging in a newspaper campaign to secure public support for the reservation of munition workers from military service. L. G. says the Ministry have got a grant from the Treasury for the purpose, supposed to be £50,000. Brade inquired if I knew of this. I replied that the Ministry had set up a Publicity Department which was issuing the articles to the Press. I also told him that the newspapers were beginning to resent the action of Government Departments in flooding the Press with propaganda articles, and that the new departure was regarded with much suspicion.

I told Brade that the Newspaper Proprietors' Association were about to pass a resolution on the subject of these Publicity Departments in connection with Government offices. I also told him, as I had told L. G., that the main object of the Ministry of Munitions campaign is to work up public opinion in favour of a liberal reservation of munition workers.

5TH.—Dined with L. G., who told me that he had made an important speech at the War Council this week in which he reviewed the whole situation. Asquith said to Hankey, the Secretary of the Council, that L. G.'s speech was one of the most concise and logical statements he had ever heard—not a word wasted. L. G. spoke for an hour. The Council have telegraphed to the Allies inviting them to a conference in Paris at the end of this week. Asquith and L. G. are to represent Great Britain. The Council were unanimous in asking L. G. to act as one of the delegates. He did not propose himself. L. G. takes a serious view of the situation and fears a recurrence of the heavy losses on the Somme. I said I feared that unless we make substantial progress during the spring and summer, the nation will grow weary of pouring out blood, treasure, and ships, and that there will be a danger of a strong peace party.

L. G. thinks so too, and for that reason also is very anxious as to the policy of the Allies.

19TH.—L. G., Lord Shaughnessy,<sup>1</sup> and T. P. O'Connor to lunch. Much talk of the war. Lord S. strongly urged that the Allies should provide the Russians with a first-class railway traffic manager. L. G. said the Russians would not accept such assistance. Their conditions are peculiar. Notwithstanding the autocracy, they cannot do what we can do here and what the French can do. M. Thomas, the French Minister, proposed to his colleague in Russia that he should impose certain rules upon the workmen in the Russian munition factories. The answer was, "We dare not. There would be a revolution." This shows, said L. G., that an organised democracy which has made up its mind is more powerful than an autocracy.

R.: The trouble is that a democracy usually wastes a good deal of time in making up its mind and in choosing its leaders. [No one hazarded an opinion whether Germany is an autocracy or democracy.]

To dinner with L. G.. Found him very gloomy.

L. G.: I am very depressed about the war. Perhaps it is because I am tired. I have not felt so depressed before. I want to go away for a week alone, so that I may think quietly by myself. Things look bad. The Rumanian news is alarming. The Rumanians have lost half their army. I have had a disturbing telegram from a Rumanian who is friendly to this country. The Russians are doing wonderful things; they are pouring in troops and may yet save the situation. But a terrible thing has happened. The Russian arsenal at Archangel has been blown up by a German spy. The loss of ammunition is most serious and there is no means of replacing it. The explosion is worse than the loss of a big battle.

R.: When is the Conference?

L. G.: We go to Paris on Tuesday. The Conference will probably last four days. I think the time has come when the politicians must exercise more power regarding the appropriation of supplies. The soldiers and officials in each country are too intent on providing for their own requirements; they will not pay due regard to those of their Allies. Russia in

<sup>1</sup> President Canadian-Pacific Railway; d. 1923.

particular is neglected. This is a fatal error. We are now at a testing point. If the patient can survive the next few months, all will be well. It is a serious crisis. The Italians are doing well. The old Roman spirit has revived. They are doing well in both departments—fighting and munitions.

(Here the Marquis de Chasseloup Laubat arrived.)

L. G. (to the Marquis): Well, what do you think of the position?

The Marquis shook his head, and said he thought the Rumanian situation very serious, in view of the destruction of the Russian munitions. We talked of M. Cambon, a close friend of the Marquis.

L. G.: He is a great man. He had much to do with our coming into the war. He came and wept—and the German Ambassador came and wept, but he wept clumsily. Cambon wept like an artist.

They talked of Albert Thomas, the French Minister of Munitions, of whom they both expressed the highest opinion. L. G. said it was a wonderful thing that the munitions of France should have been organised by three Professors—Thomas and two others.

This week another descent upon Walton Heath by the Irish, who want to keep in close touch with L. G.. T. P. O'Connor, Devlin, Maguire,<sup>1</sup> and Browne<sup>2</sup> arrived. The Irish evidently meditate a conference of some sort next year. T. P. said Lord Shaughnessy was coming from Canada to be present.

Very busy this week in regard to threatened strike in South Wales and organisation of agricultural resources. Settled with Howard Frank form of resolution to be submitted to Committee appointed by the War Office concerning employment of German prisoners.

26TH.—Dined with L. G.. Found him much preoccupied. This afternoon T. P. O'Connor and John Dillon<sup>3</sup> had tea with him. This is the first time he has seen the latter since the breakdown in the negotiations. L. G. says Dillon is a nice, interest-

<sup>1</sup> A prominent Irishman, a friend of T. P. O'Connor.

<sup>2</sup> An Irish barrister.

<sup>3</sup> National M.P. Co. Mayo, 1885-1918; d. 1927.

ing man, but politically impossible. I said, "He has the head and face of a fanatic."

L. G.: Yes, a typical fanatic.

I told L. G. that Donald of the *Daily Chronicle* had asked to see the P.M. and hoped to do so to-morrow, when he proposed to tell him that things cannot go on as they are doing, and to suggest that a committee of three or four—Asquith, L. G., Bonar Law, and Balfour—should be appointed to control the country—the members to be relieved of their departmental duties so that they would be enabled more effectually to exercise a judicial mind on matters brought before them. I said I had long had this idea and was glad Donald was going to put it forward.

L. G.: No doubt General Robertson has urged him to do so. But I fear it would not work; the Committee would never decide anything. Asquith is too judicial. This is what happens. The Court (Mr. A.), "Now, Mr. Brown, will you please state your case." He states it in great detail, punctuated by questions and observations of members of the Committee. Thereupon his opponent begins to state his case. When he has been doing so for some little time, the Court (Mr. A.) remarks, "I fear that we shall now have to adjourn, as we all have important appointments in the afternoon with the Clerk of the Court." Hankey (Secretary to the War Council), "When can we proceed with this case? Next Monday?" "Very well, we will meet again on Monday." When Monday arrives, the Court says, "I am very sorry that we cannot proceed with this case to-day; another pressing matter has supervened which must be disposed of. We will therefore adjourn this until Thursday." On Thursday the case is again part heard and probably no decision is arrived at for another week, when it is too late.

R.: We shall lose the war through lack of cohesion between the Government departments. They are all engaged in fighting each other instead of fighting the Germans. Too much domestic patriotism.

L. G.: Quite true. The departments all compete with each other, and there is no one to settle their differences. Things look very bad.

He then went over to the bookcase and took out a book to which he wrote a preface last year. This he read with great effect. In it he foretold victory if the nation acted energetically and promptly, but disaster if it shuffled and hesitated. He said, "We have been shuffling and hesitating, and see our position in consequence. Look at Rumania. When Rumania decided to come in, the Allies should have sent someone to advise her. Proper precautions should have been taken. Then look at the food question. We have delayed the production of home-grown crops until it is nearly too late."

R. : The *Morning Post* has been patting you on the back this week.

L. G. : Yes. A curious *volte-face*. The Young Tories are at the back of that. They are very dissatisfied, and anxious that I should take charge of affairs.

R. : How about Bonar Law?

L. G. : Max Aitken has just telephoned to say he is coming here to see me at 9.30 p.m. No doubt he is coming from Bonar. I know how he will begin. "Look here! I've seen Bonar Law and I've told him, etc." Someone said a good thing about Bonar the other day. He said Bonar Law ought to be kept in cold storage and brought out when you want him to make a speech. He makes good speeches, but in Council he is not so good.

R. : I saw General Robertson the other day. He was looking rather worn.

L. G. : Yes. He has had a great strain.

R. : I hear Sir Ernest Moir has been at the front in France. He has returned much depressed. He says we cannot hope to advance; our railway system is inadequate and the horses are literally being drowned in the mud.

L. G. : Yes. I am afraid he is right. Really, the soldiers have not shone. I doubt if they could produce twenty-three minds equal to our Cabinet, with all its defects. And, by the way, one of its defects is the number of able men with strong opinions which it comprises. The clash of ideas is too great.

R. : If one member cannot carry his own plan, his object is to prevent any other member carrying his. Compromise is the

result. And the compromise is usually carried out by someone who does not believe in it.

L. G.: Yes. I know that from experience; I have sometimes been the unhappy man by whom the compromise has had to be carried out. Then again, how frequently you get no decision at all! As Robertson says, in war you must have decisions. You must risk wrong decisions. Inaction and indecision are fatal.

R.: Donald had tea with Mrs. Asquith the other day. She told him that Mr. A. had been sadly hit by the death of his son, and that never a day passes but he deploras his loss. That looks bad. It seems as if he is breaking, poor man, under the strain.

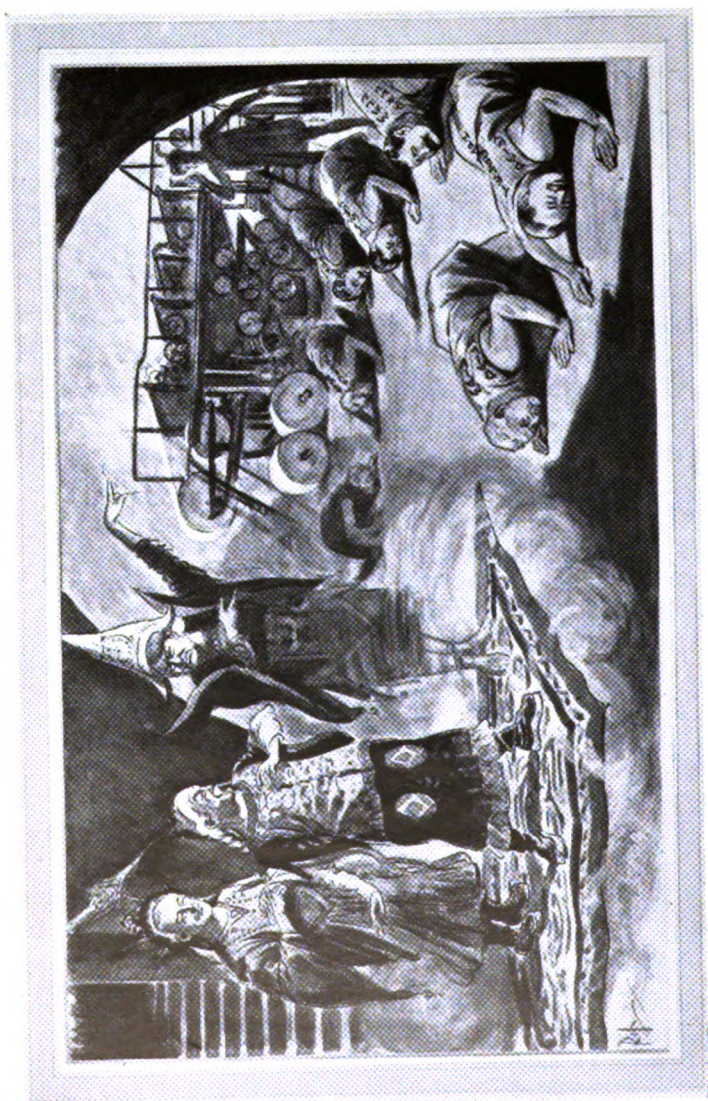
L. G.: Yes. There is no doubt that his son's death, followed by recent events in the war, have hit him hard.

At this point Max Aitken arrived and I retired. The crisis is serious. Lord Reading is on the scene as usual on such occasions. L. G. telephoned him to-night.

29TH.—Colonel David Davies, L. G.'s Parliamentary Secretary, tells me that L. G. is most distressed regarding the position and is threatening to resign. Davies wants me to see him and advise him not to do so. D. says the situation is most serious.







THE SLAVE of the LAMP - Carl Nordström

"THE SLAVES OF THE LAMP"  
ALADDIN - The Right Hon David Lloyd George

THE WIDOW TWAN KI - Sir George Balfour

The Original Cartoon Published in "The" Christmas Number 1918

## Chapter XXX

*The fall of Asquith—He declines to serve under Bonar Law—  
L. G. becomes Prime Minister—The new Cabinet—Bonar Law's  
view of Asquith.*

DECEMBER 1ST, 1916.—L. G. and Burnham to breakfast.

L. G.: I see that the Government have taken over Montagu House. To whom does it belong?

BURNHAM: The Duke of Buccleuch.

L. G.: Is he a nice man?

B: Yes.

L. G.: Now that Northcliffe has deserted me I shall have to depend on the Dukes. An alliance with Northcliffe is something like going for a walk with a grasshopper.

BURNHAM: I have received serious information from the front. I am told that our only chance of breaking through is to make an attack all along the line, that another million and a half men will be required for this purpose, and that the Army looks to you to get the men. The position is serious. Our staff work is bad and our regimental officers inexperienced. One does not like to face the awful slaughter which may result under existing conditions.

L. G.: The transport arrangements are bad. This may delay matters and thus give further opportunities for training the officers and troops in the field. The truth is that the soldiers in the higher commands have not done well. All their plans have been adopted. The civilians should have put their foot down; we have been too easily led by the soldiers.

BURNHAM: I have had an interesting letter from Dr. Dillon, whose prophecies have proved remarkably accurate. He says things in Rumania are as bad as they can be, that the French Government may fall next week, and that the state of Russia is most alarming. He also says that with us optimism amounts to a disease.

L. G.: Yes, the prospects are gloomy. We have only just

a chance to win the war. We cannot win unless things are changed. If they are not changed I shall leave them [the Cabinet].

R.: Who is going to Russia? I hope you are not going. I hear Robertson has declined to go. Asquith asked him to Downing Street and urged him to go, but he absolutely refused without argument.

L. G.: Yes, that is correct. I think he made a mistake. Grey is going. The Russians are in sad need of advice and stimulation. They were most anxious that I should go. Perhaps I ought to have gone. It was difficult to decide.

R.: What do you think of the new Naval Board?

L. G.: It is an improvement.

BURNHAM: Old Fisher is still intriguing. He is an extraordinary man.

L. G.: Yes, he has the flair for war. He has something the others have not got. It is a pity he acted as he did when he resigned. Asquith wrote a letter in the name of the King directing him not to resign, but he disregarded it.

BURNHAM: He was quite impossible. He wanted to see my father, but he was too unwell. I saw him. I could do nothing with him.

As L. G. was leaving I asked him to play golf to-morrow (Saturday). He said pointedly, "Not to-morrow, but next Saturday," which means resignation or reconstruction!

2ND.—Donald says the Prime Minister has asked to see him to-morrow (Sunday). He has never seen the P.M. before on political business, and thinks the crisis will be settled by a reconstruction of the War Council. I told him L. G. had resigned, or would do so to-morrow. He seemed very much surprised.

To-day the political situation developed into a crisis. Yesterday L. G. wrote a letter to the P.M. in effect demanding that the War Council should be reduced in number, that L. G. should be Chairman, that Mr. A. should conduct the general business of the Government, and that he should have a veto on the general decisions of the War Council.

3RD.—I hear on good authority that the War Council has decided to entrust aircraft construction to the Ministry of

Munitions. Curzon is furious and threatens resignation. I hear also that the War Council has decided on compulsory service for all up to 55. We are moving!

I dined at L. G.'s at Walton Heath, but he was unable to come down from London. He had been down to lunch and had returned to see the P.M.. His resignation was publicly announced, but Mrs. L. G. did not know whether he had actually resigned. During the evening he telephoned that his interview with the P.M. had been satisfactory.

4TH.—Saw L. G. at the War Office. Found him reading War Office papers. He says he hears the P.M. is going back on all he said yesterday, although he had confirmed the interview by letter. What will happen L. G. does not know. He is determined to insist upon his demands and to resign if they are not granted. I told him I thought he was quite right. Lord Derby then came into the room. I said (to L. G.), "I hope you are firm." He answered, "Firm as a rock." I said, "If inside criticism is ineffective, the critic is powerless, as he is prevented by his official position from public criticism. You must either secure that inside criticism will be effective or you must resign."

L. G. : If your tongue is tied by red-tape you can do nothing.

5TH.—Asquith has resigned.

6TH.—Bonar Law has declined to form a Government. The King has sent for L. G.

L. G. and Burnham were to dine with me at Queen Anne's Gate. L. G. arrived an hour late. He looked tired and worn. He said he and Carson met Bonar Law last night. B. L. was indisposed to form a Government. L. G. and Carson urged him to do so. L. G. offered to serve under him in any capacity. B. L. ultimately agreed, subject to Asquith and his associates taking office under him. To-day Asquith declined. This evening the King called a conference consisting of Asquith, L. G., Bonar Law, Balfour, and Grey. Balfour got up from his bed to attend. Asquith absolutely declined to serve under Bonar Law. He said that after being Premier he could not accept a subordinate position. L. G. thinks Mr. A. acted badly. The interview was, however, most friendly. This pleased the King, who

was evidently glad to see that Asquith and L. G. were on such good terms. L. G. said his relations with Asquith had always been of the most friendly character. They have never had a quarrel. L. G. thinks Balfour was surprised at Asquith's attitude. L. G. says that on Sunday Asquith agreed to his proposals with certain modifications, which L. G. accepted. Bonham Carter, Asquith's secretary and son-in-law, was delighted. Now A. says no agreement was reached and that the proposals were only agreed for subsequent consideration. L. G. says whether A. is losing his memory, whether he does not know what he is saying, or whether his statement is open to another construction, he does not know. Bonar Law told L. G. that subsequent to the interview between L. G. and Asquith, the latter said to Bonar Law that a settlement had been arrived at. B. L. cannot understand A.'s action in repudiating it. All A.'s best friends, Bonham Carter, Hankey, and Eric Drummond,<sup>1</sup> advised A. to enter into the arrangement. L. G. thinks he was persuaded in the other direction by McKenna and Runciman. L. G. does not know what advice Grey gave. Montagu has been acting with L. G., so L. G. says, but his personal friendship for the P.M. will cause him to follow Mr. A.. Burnham says he saw the P.M. this morning and urged him to serve under Bonar Law. He understood Mr. A. would do so. When L. G. had gone, Burnham told me Asquith had referred to the Press campaign against him and had suggested that L. G. was responsible for it. Burnham said Asquith was very bitter. Evidently he conceals his feelings from L. G.

To proceed with the account of the conference with the King. On Bonar Law's refusing to form an administration, the King requested L. G. to do so. L. G. has undertaken the task, which he says is a thankless one. Bonar Law and the Conservatives will serve under him and he thinks Henderson will, subject to securing the approval of the Labour Party. H. was willing to serve under Bonar Law on the same conditions. L. G. has the support of at least eighty Liberals upon whom he can draw in case of need. If he cannot form a Cabinet from

<sup>1</sup> The Hon. Sir Eric Drummond, Private Secretary to Mr. Asquith, 1912-15; to Foreign Secretary, 1915-19.

amongst the politicians, he will invoke the aid of business men to carry on the war. Should the House of Commons prove impossible, he will go to the country. There are still 7,200,000 voters here, and he thinks he will receive overwhelming support. McKenna is bitterly opposed to him. Runciman acts in concert with McKenna. L. G. spoke strongly of the imprudence of Northcliffe's leaders in the *Daily Mail* during the last few days. He had not seen him for three months till Monday or yesterday, I forget which, when he implored N. to refrain from abusing Asquith and Balfour. L. G. inquired whether he could count on Burnham's support. B. replied in the affirmative. Burnham suggested that I should see N. and endeavour to persuade him to mitigate his abuse of Asquith and Balfour, which was calculated to exacerbate the situation and render L. G.'s task more difficult. I replied that I thought such a request might be productive of more harm than good. L. G. said nothing, but I think agreed with me. As he left I wished him good luck. He replied, "I shall do my best. The belief of these fellows that I shall fail will be an additional incentive!" He would eat no dinner beyond a plate of soup. From me he was going to see Bonar Law, who had gone to see Arthur Balfour. Burnham says that at the party meeting at Bonar Law's house, he (B. L.) was entrusted with a letter to Asquith. Bonar Law telephoned inquiring if he could see Mr. A. and was invited to go to Downing Street. Bonar Law took the letter with him, but quite forgot to deliver it. (Probably he thought it sufficient to state the contents orally.—R.)

We talked of Curzon. L. G. said he had great knowledge—information of a sort which is uncommon amongst British politicians. He knows foreign countries; he has travelled widely. He is dogmatic and often unreasonable, but he brings something to the general stock which is very valuable.

8TH.—Donald had an interview with Asquith this week. Asquith denied that he had made any arrangement with L. G. on Sunday last or that his letter was a confirmation of such an arrangement. Asquith said he wrote the letter with great care, and subsequently (on the Monday) gave the subject much thought. As a result, he came to the conclusion that although an agreement in principle might have been possible, the plan

would certainly have broken down on the question of the personnel of the War Council. Later he saw Grey and McKenna, who confirmed the opinion. Asquith further said it never occurred to him for a moment that the P.M., who was empowered by L. G.'s proposals to attend the War Council, would not preside when present, as the P.M. is always *ex-officio* chairman of all committees he attends.

10TH.—L. G. telephoned and asked me to dine as usual. When an official envelope arrived addressed to the "Prime Minister," he laughed and said, "I cannot help thinking this has come to the wrong person. When I left the Board of Trade I felt just the same. For some time if I heard anyone speaking of the President of the Board of Trade, I always felt he was speaking of me." I congratulated him on his success, and added he knew no one was more pleased than I was. He said, "I know how gratified you feel." At dinner he was full of fun and kept us in roars of laughter by imitating a speech of Curzon's at the War Council. He again referred to Curzon's great knowledge, which is most valuable, he says. One day L. G. remarked to Balfour, "Curzon is always an object of wonder to me. I could sit and listen to him for hours. I sometimes ask myself whether I could speak as he does." "No," said Arthur Balfour, laughing, "of course you could not."

L. G.: Curzon's great defect is that he always feels that he is sitting on a golden throne, and must speak accordingly.

I congratulated L. G. on his arrangement with the Labour Party, which I said was crucial.

L. G.: Vital! I made the best speech I have ever made.

R.: Was it prepared?

L. G.: No. I did not know that I had to speak, but it really was a good speech. Sidney Webb<sup>1</sup> was there. He came determined to give trouble. I went for him, and that pleased the Labour people. Snowden was very unpleasant. He asked whether I was in favour of this terrible slaughter. I said, "Mr. Snowden must know there are men in this room who have sons fighting in the war." He apologised. I think I have got a good Ministry. I have done my best to get the right men. Balfour acted well. He will be a great source of strength to a Govern-

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Passfield.

ment which is a National Government. I am sorry for some of my friends. They would not have Winston at any price. Had I insisted, the new Ministry would have been wrecked. The same remark applies to Reading. Neither of them has been near me. I suppose they felt that their approaches would have placed me in an awkward position. Then I should have liked to give Dalziel something, but I could not take in a newspaper man; it was impossible. The same remark applies to Rothermere. I told him so.

L. G. referred to a recent scene in the War Council between himself and one of his colleagues who had accused him of endeavouring to get rid of his Chief of Staff (Robertson) by sending him on a mission to Russia. He said, "The P.M. took no action. That hardened me. I felt I could not go on with benefit to the nation under such circumstances. Bonar Law has been here to-day. He is very timid. He is worrying about matters which really give no cause. Difficulties will arise in forming new Governments. You cannot provide for everybody. Bonar Law said to me, 'You are a wonderful little man. You have such courage.' Bonar Law is very worried because no provision has been made for Max Aitken."

R.: I can understand his feelings. Max Aitken has been very useful to him. He relies on his advice. I am glad Bonar Law will usually lead the House of Commons. That will please the Conservatives.

L. G.: Yes. We shall have a strong front bench. A good deal will depend on my speech on Thursday. I tried to prepare it to-day, but was too worn out. I had a sleep instead. I must get on with it to-night.

R.: Why not reproduce some parts of your speech to the Labour Party?

L. G.: Yes, it covered the ground. I think I will. By the way, I have told Northcliffe that if he endeavours to wreck this Government, I shall have to appeal to the House of Commons. The position is serious. I am very worried about the war.

While I was with him, L. G. spent a considerable time in reading dispatches and had the Secretary of the War Council with him all day.

L. G. was anxious to know what I thought of the War



Council. I said, "It looks good, but many things look well which are ineffective. Experience alone will tell. Just as in mating two clever people you cannot be sure of clever progeny."

L. G. (laughing): Well, we shall see what sort of a breeder I prove. Milner strikes me as very able. I watched him very carefully to-day. He picked out the important points at once.

R.: Why did George Cave give up the Solicitor-Generalship?

L. G.: He was thought the most suitable man for the Home Office. He has taken the position on the understanding that he is to be appointed to the first high judicial vacancy. He wants to leave public life. I have stipulated with Finlay<sup>1</sup> that he shall not claim the pension.

R.: Finlay is a good appointment. It will command respect. He is an honest old boy and a great lawyer.

L. G. (laughing): Well, he looks honest anyhow. That is a great asset for a lawyer.

He asked me to see Winston and explain why he had been left out, and tell him that he (L. G.) would endeavour to find some position for him, such as Chairman of the Air Board, when the Report of the Dardanelles Commission had been published. L. G. then retired to get on with his speech for next week. Mrs. L. G. gave me a letter to read from Mrs. Asquith in which she asked Mrs. L. G. to allow the Asquiths to stay at No. 10 Downing Street for a fortnight longer. Mrs. A. reminded Mrs. L. G. of the happy days when "Puffin" (as a small boy) and Megan used to play in the garden of No. 10, and remarked that the Asquiths would have to take quite a small house.

11TH.—Called upon Winston and gave him my message. Mrs. C. came in as I was finishing and I had to repeat. Winston said, "I don't reproach him. His conscience will tell him what he should do. Give him that message and tell him that I cannot allow what you have said to fetter my freedom of action. I will take any position which will enable me to serve my country. My only purpose is to help to defeat the Hun, and I will subordinate my own feelings so that I may be able to render some assistance.

<sup>1</sup> Lord Finlay, Lord Chancellor; d. 1929.

12TH.—Called to see L. G.. Found him suffering from a severe chill, due, as he said, to his having sat in his room at the War Office without a fire. Recounted with discretion my interview with Winston, and suggested that L. G. should invite him to lunch, which he said he would do.

13TH.—Burnham says it would be well for L. G. to see General Allenby,<sup>1</sup> who is here on leave. He has much of interest to say. Wrote to L. G. accordingly, and he has sent word asking me to arrange an interview next week.

20TH.—Hartshorn wrote to ask me to tell the P.M. that the miners had been sitting all day to consider Government proposals to take over mines. He said the men were apprehensive that the penal sections of the Munitions Act would be applied. The miners are to see the P.M. to-morrow.

21ST.—Called at Downing Street and dictated memorandum for the P.M. setting out points which miners would make and suggesting course to be adopted. Later called and saw the P.M., who said meeting with miners had gone off most satisfactorily. While at Downing Street saw Gardiner, editor of the *Daily News*, waiting to see L. G.. He looked worn. All his ideals have been shattered.

CHRISTMAS DAY.—Lunched and spent afternoon with L. G. at Walton Heath. I told him that Asquith had offered Donald of the *Daily Chronicle* a knighthood, which he had refused. This had been followed by the offer of a baronetcy, which Donald had also declined. (Donald told me so this morning and showed me Asquith's letter offering the knighthood.) L. G. said he understood that a knighthood had also been offered to Spender of the *Westminster*.

R.: You saw Gardiner of the *Daily News* on Thursday. I hear that he asked Donald to join him in urging discussion of peace terms. Of course D. declined. He is sound on the war, and he knew what to expect when he reached home had he adopted any other course.

(Mrs. D. is a Frenchwoman and a most ardent patriot and anti-German.)

L. G. (laughing heartily): Well, surely you don't object.

<sup>1</sup> Now Field-Marshal Lord Allenby. In command of 3rd Army, France, 1915-17.

Every man is entitled to endeavour to ward off domestic misery.

R.: In this instance, interest coincided with duty. What is the real meaning of the German Peace Note?

L. G.: The Germans are beginning to feel the pinch. I think the German Government are anxious to show the German people that they are doing all that lies in their power to make peace, and that the brutal Allies will not agree.

In view of the discussion (1932) as to Mr. Bonar Law's views concerning Mr. Asquith, the following note of a conversation between B. L. and myself on May 4th, 1919, may be appropriately interjected.

We talked of the Cabinet system. Bonar Law said that when he joined Asquith's Cabinet he was astonished at the lack of method, the absence of any agenda or minutes. He told Asquith this. The latter said that everyone who joined the Cabinet made the same observation, but speedily became reconciled to the method of doing business and saw its advantages for the special purpose.

I said, "You and L. G. have worked well together. Your loyalty and lack of ambition have been very useful."

B. L.: Yes, I recognise that if I had been ambitious it would have made things very difficult, but I have no ambition, and unfortunately I have lost all zest in my work. You know what I mean. They tell me that I am looking better than I was. It is true that I am feeling better physically, but never since the war started have I felt so depressed and so lacking in energy. I am afraid that my nerve is not what it was. I have had to bear a great deal.

He said that Asquith was a nice man to work with, but "very tricky," of which he gave instances. He added the view that if it had not been for Kitchener, Asquith might have gone right through the war. Kitchener let him down.

I said, "Yes, but he did great things all the same, and in a measure held Asquith up."

B. L.: That is quite true, but in the end K.'s incompetence ruined Asquith. He was not the man to handle such a state of affairs. I [B. L.] remember that when K. left, Robertson wanted to get someone plastic at the War Office. His idea

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**LORD RIDDELL'S WAR DIARY**

was Walter Long. I telephoned to Asquith saying I wished to see him. I told him if he appointed Long, I should resign. I said, "You must appoint L. G.. He wants the job and you will have to give it to him. You had better do it with a good grace. If you wanted to break with him, perhaps at one time you might have done so, but now he is too strong for you. If you stand in his way, he will probably crush you."

## Chapter XXXI

*Asquith's miscalculation—The labour and recruiting tangle—Winston and the Dardanelles Report—The submarine menace grows—Revolution in Russia.*

JANUARY 13TH, 1917.—Dined with Neville Chamberlain, Director-General of National Service, Harling Turner, his chief assistant, and other members of his staff, to discuss Man-power Scheme. Naturally he is much impressed by the difficulties of his task. I suggested he might divide the trades into three classes—essential, semi-essential, and non-essential, and take all the A1 men from the non-essential, 75 per cent. from the partly essential, and 10 per cent. from the essential, leaving the employers to get fresh labour.

Turner gave an amusing account of how Horne<sup>1</sup> came to London. He met Turner in Edinburgh when Turner was on his way to London to take up his position. He said to Turner, facetiously, "Do you want a secretary?" Turner said, "Yes." Horne said, "Will I do?" Turner said, "Yes, you are the very man!" Whereupon, greatly to Turner's surprise, Horne said, "Done with you! I am coming!" Horne fetched his bag and came to London with Turner. When I first saw Horne he was working in Turner's room as his secretary.

14TH.—Dined with L. G.. Donald also present.

R.: When in Rome, did you make any public speeches?

L. G.: No, we arranged that beforehand. No speeches and no banquets. They are objectionable in several ways. They not only occupy time, but instinctively one's mind is diverted to forthcoming orations.

R.: Were you satisfied?

L. G.: Yes, very pleased. It is the best conference we have had. We were faced with one awkward question on which we had a difference of opinion. Briand spoke for three-quarters of an hour. He made a splendid speech, and punctuated his

<sup>1</sup> Later Sir Robert Horne, P.C.

remarks with oratorical gestures, just as if he had been speaking to 5,000 people instead of a dozen. He was so emphatic that things looked awkward. However, next day, having delivered his speech, he troubled very little more about the matter. Like a true artist, he had painted his picture—he had painted it well. There was no occasion to trouble further.

R.: You made a good speech at the Guildhall. When did you prepare it?

L. G.: In bed on Thursday morning. (The speech was delivered on Thursday.) I had not much time. I had to deal with one or two important topics, relating to foreign affairs.

R.: Who controls Russian affairs now?

L. G.: The position is similar to that in France before the French Revolution. You have a kindly, patriotic, well-meaning monarch, dominated by a masterful wife with inadequate knowledge and experience, and narrow, reactionary ideals. When acting on good advice he makes some wise decision, then his consort persuades him to draw back. It is a singular situation and difficult to diagnose.

R.: Who wrote the Allies' reply to Wilson's Peace Note<sup>1</sup>? It was well done.

L. G.: Berthelot, head of the French Foreign Office. He is a fine writer. The Note was not well translated, I am told.

DONALD: I hear that Asquith has been ordered three months' rest. I wonder if he will again take a great part in public life?

L. G.: I doubt if he will. He has had a trying time.

DONALD: Why don't you make him our French Ambassador?

L. G.: He would not take it.

R.: He would make a splendid Lord Chancellor.

L. G.: Yes, admirable. I would have offered him the position, but did not want to run the risk of offending him.

DONALD: He would not have taken it. He declined to

<sup>1</sup> On December 18th, 1916, President Wilson sent a Note to all the belligerents, asking them to state the terms on which they would consider peace. Germany evaded the question. The Allies definitely stipulated that Germany should offer "complete restitution, full reparation, and effectual guarantees" before there could be any thought of peace.

serve under Bonar Law. Bonar Law told me so, and that he was convinced Asquith thought Bonar Law could not go on without him, in which supposition he was correct. Bonar Law and his friends thought him indispensable. Asquith was convinced that you [the P.M.] would be unable to form a Government, and that the King would have to recall him. Asquith confirmed this when I saw him, and when I inquired what would happen regarding you, Mr. P.M., he said, striking his hand on the table, "He will have to come in on my terms!"

L. G.: Yes, I think that is a correct historical statement.

R.: Labour and recruiting are in a horrible tangle. There are no fewer than six authorities dealing with these subjects.

L. G.: I agree. I must take some active steps. (Here he noted the matter on his list of subjects for attention.)

FEBRUARY 1ST, 1917.—Northcliffe tells me he still thinks the war will be a long business. He says the arrangements for raising the loan have been mismanaged, and made other comments on what he alleged to be the incompetence of the Government. I said they have not yet had much time in which to formulate and execute their plans. With this he did not agree, and says that unless L. G. displays greater powers of organisation he will be displaced before the war ends.

4TH.—L. G. spoke at Carnarvon yesterday. I met him at Euston to-night and drove with him to Downing Street. The United States broke off relations with Germany yesterday, and to-day Wilson's speech to Congress is published. L. G.'s first words were, "And so he is not going to fight after all! He is awaiting another insult before he actually draws the sword!" I said that apparently the Germans were anxious to embroil the whole world, and thus force a peace conference. L. G. agreed. He thinks that if the Americans declare war they will be more active in helping the Allies with money and munitions.

I congratulated him on his speech, which he said was better than he expected, as he had not felt in the mood for speech making.

He exhibited great interest in his cat, which has injured its leg, and mingled his remarks on the international situation with words of comfort to the cat and promises to send him to the vet. in the morning.

L. G. gave me an amusing account of Bernard Shaw's preface to *Androcles and the Lion*, which he had just read, and suggested I should read it. Last week I sent him O. Henry's *Cabbages and Kings*, which he thinks most excellent.

We talked of the formation of the new Government. I said, "You seized the psychological moment."

L. G.: Yes. I had been very unhappy and dissatisfied for some time before, but I did well to wait.

11TH.—Dined with L. G. at Walton Heath. We talked of the naval and military situation. I inquired whether the time had not arrived when the War Council must sum up and balance the different national requirements, viz. man-power for the army, munitions, shipbuilding, and agriculture. Each of these is essential, and neglect of any one of them may be disastrous.

L. G.: Yes, that is quite true. I fear we are about to enter upon a big fight with the soldiers, who wish to disregard all other branches. I have to-day determined to be quite firm. I will not have any more men taken from the farms, the collieries, the shipbuilding yards, or the railways. The Army wanted to take 60,000 men from agriculture. Prothero<sup>1</sup> thought he could let them have 30,000. Now he finds that he can only spare 6,000. The soldiers say to me, "It is your business to find the men." I have said to them, "Show me where the men can be got without sacrificing other essentials." They say, amongst other things, "Apply conscription to Ireland." What would be the result? Scenes in the House of Commons, a possible rupture with America, which is hanging in the balance, and serious disaffection in Canada, Australia, and South Africa. They would say, "You are fighting for the freedom of nationalities. What right have you to take this little nation by the ears and drag it into the war against its will?" If you passed the Act you would only get 160,000 men. You could only get them at the point of the bayonet, and a conscientious objection clause would exempt by far the greater number. As it is, these men are producing food which we badly need. The soldiers will not see that. If they resign, I shall at once accept their resignations and go to the House of Commons. The country will not sup-

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Ernle, President Board of Agriculture, 1916-19.



port them. The nation knows that food, ships, coal, and transport are vital, and that we have now reached the point when these industries can be no further depleted.

R.: Why not send out some of the troops we have at home and make more use of the volunteers?

L. G.: That we have decided upon.

R.: The situation with regard to the submarine menace is critical.

L. G.: In March 1915, Selborne,<sup>1</sup> who was then at the Board of Agriculture, wanted to act. I supported him, and foreshadowed the submarine danger. Both the Prime Minister and Kitchener ridiculed the idea. Nothing was done. Then our mines (destructive) have been grossly neglected. They are badly designed and don't act, and we have only 6,000 where we ought to have 300,000. We should have had a triple row of mines all along the German coast. Fisher did not believe in mines. We have done well this week with the submarines. We have taken five, but I do not believe we can rely on capture.

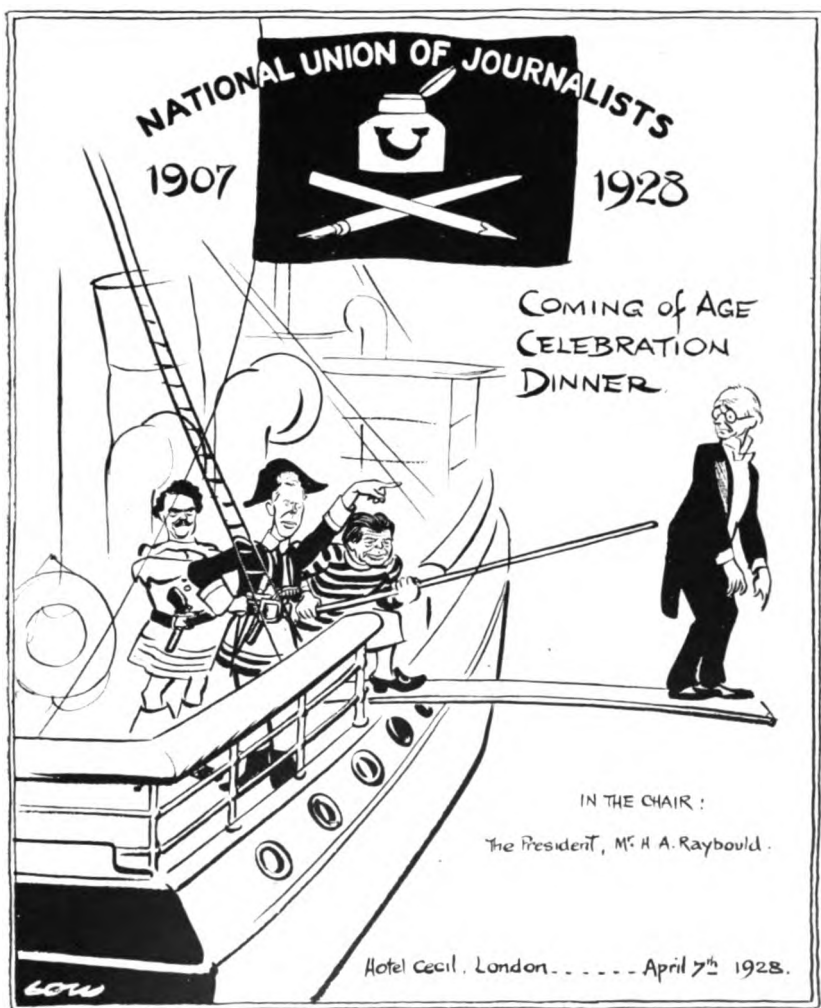
We talked of Winston. L. G. said that he dined with him, Jack Seely, and F. E. Smith on Thursday and that he (L. G.) did not reach home until 1 a.m., which was a novel experience.

L. G. said, laughing, "Elizabeth Asquith remarked the other day, 'Some people's faults you have to dig for; some people's faults lie openly upon the ground; some people dig their faults up and throw them at you!'"

L. G.: Winston belongs to the last-named class. He is always frank and never tries to hide his faults and shortcomings.

We discussed many other topics, and L. G. made reminder notes of various points in the little book which he now carries in his dispatch box. He has a high opinion of Hankey, secretary to the War Council. He says Hankey is a very able man. L. G. gave an amusing account of one of his days last week, when he spent two hours on potatoes and pigs, two hours on shipbuilding, and two hours on the American situation, including an interview with the Ambassador, in addition to which he had conferences on other subjects. "And then," he said, "they grumble because I am not in the House of

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Selborne, President Board of Agriculture, 1915-16.



LOW'S CARTOON OF LORD RIDDELL "WALKING THE PLANK."



Commons. I cannot be everywhere. I cannot run the war and spend my time in the House; it would be an impossibility. I am always at work, even when the Cabinet is not sitting. This last week I have made a point of going for a few little walks in the Park. They have done me good. One must have a little exercise."

14TH.—Dined with the Other Club and drove home with Winston. He said that during the war he would not join in an attack upon the Government unless serious occasion for such action arose, but he reserved full liberty of action. I asked him what he thought of Asquith's speech in the House of Commons on the opening of Parliament. He thought it poor. "At this stage of the war," he said, "oratory and rhetoric are useless. The conduct of the Germans has been described a hundred times in every possible combination of words. A speech to be of any value must contain useful suggestions or constructive criticism. Asquith's speech contained neither."

15TH.—Lunched with Winston at his house. When I arrived he handed me the Dardanelles Report, which had been lent him by L. G.. After I had skimmed it, he asked my candid opinion. I told him I thought he had come well out of the inquiry, but that the document would be damaging to Asquith and Kitchener. I felt sure the public would be surprised at the findings, and shocked at the disclosures regarding the conduct of the war. I said L. G. would of course publish the Report. Winston replied in the affirmative, but said Asquith was making efforts to prevent publication. The evidence is not to be published, as it contains secret matter which cannot be disclosed during the war, including proof that when we stopped the naval operations the Turks had only three rounds of ammunition left. I inquired how Winston thought Fisher had come out of the inquiry. He replied, "Not well."

In the evening Brade and others dined with me. Brade said the whole of the Dardanelles story had not been told. When the Commission was appointed, the War Office asked to see the evidence as it was taken, so that the various Departments might be instructed to look out and submit all relative documents. This was refused, with the result that the Commission have not had before them all the War Office papers.

18TH.—L. G. called for me and I returned with him for dinner. He referred to the strain on his colleagues and himself. This week has been one of the hardest he has ever experienced. Since he has been P.M. he has held seventy-five meetings and the War Cabinet have interviewed ninety experts.

L. G.: Devonport,<sup>1</sup> the Food Controller, and Prothero, President of the Board of Agriculture, have both broken down under the strain. Prothero has been seriously worried by his critics. He is unaccustomed to criticism. I don't like it—no one does—but I have been criticised so often that criticism does not worry me. It does not affect my sleep or my appetite. It is all a part of the day's work.

We talked of the Dardanelles Report. L. G. said that Asquith has written protesting against the Report being published without the evidence. L. G. intends nevertheless to publish the Report on Monday. L. G., who has known Mr. A. for years, says that he has no doubt he is playing a deep game, and at the right moment will endeavour to strike and regain his office. L. G. thinks it may be necessary in his speech on imports on Thursday to say that restrictions should have been imposed twelve months ago, and that had this been done enormous savings might have been effected both in ships and money.

L. G. (with great emphasis): If you examine the actual conduct of affairs, you will find that Asquith's record is unsatisfactory.

R.: He and Grey united the nation with your help—a great achievement.

L. G.: Yes, that is true.

R.: Mr. A. carried conscription. It is true that if he had realised and grasped the situation in September 1914, when the nation was ready to make any sacrifice, conscription might have been had for the asking. As it was, he allowed the public fear and enthusiasm to evaporate and thus created a situation which he managed with no little skill and discretion.

L. G.: But he had to be pressed forward. He only took the step because Robertson and I threatened to resign.

R.: How do you stand with your colleagues?

<sup>1</sup> Now Viscount Devonport; Food Controller, 1916-17.

L. G.: Well, I have Carson, Bonar Law, and Henderson. Neither of the first two would be inclined to serve under the other, but both are willing to serve under me. Then I think that Milner and I stand for very much the same things. He is a poor man, and so am I. He does not represent the landed or capitalist classes any more than I do. He is keen on social reform, and so am I. Balfour, again, would rather serve under me than under Bonar Law.

R.: Have you prepared your speech on the restriction of imports, agriculture, and shipbuilding? It will be an epoch-making statement. Incidentally the remnants of the feudal system will be abolished without a word of comment. The royal bird, the pheasant, will be shorn of his sacred rights, the agricultural labourer will have a minimum wage of 25s., and the landlord will be forbidden to raise his rents.

L. G.: Yes, and a serious breach will be made in the sacred doctrine of Free Trade by the grant of minimum prices to the farmer for a fixed period. Truly we live in wonderful times!

MARCH 10TH, 1917.—Called at the Admiralty by appointment to see Sir Edward Carson. Suggested he should issue a statement to the editors acquainting them with the seriousness of the position and giving details. He said he welcomed the suggestion and would prepare and send me a paper. He referred to the fact that we have been losing tonnage at the rate of 500,000 tons per month and that the diminution of imports proposed by the P.M. amounted to only the same figure. The shipping losses are of course cumulative, and on the average the tonnage lost each month would transport more than 500,000 tons. He considers that we shall soon be faced with a serious shortage of food, and mentioned that the stock of grain in the country only equals the consumption for about three months.

We talked of Asquith and the Dardanelles Report. Carson said that Mr. A. presided with great dignity at the Cabinet, and that he (Carson) regarded him with feelings of friendship and affection. But Mr. A. had been a failure during the war, as he had endeavoured to conduct public affairs in the same way as he had done during times of peace. Compromise and finesse were all very well in peace time, but fatal during a war. After

a Cabinet discussion Mr. A. would say, "Well, it seems that opinion is in favour of such-and-such a course." He would not take a strong line and would endeavour to reconcile conflicting views. To take the analogy of a lawsuit. How could any case be run on such lines? When Carson was briefed with several other counsel he would have long consultations and would hear all their opinions, but before going into court he would decide upon some definite course of procedure. Vacillation and uncertainty were always fatal. I said, "Asquith would have made a great judge. He has all the qualities—patience, dignity, a judicial mind, and the power of brief and lucid statement." Carson replied, "He would have made one of the great Lord Chancellors known to history."

I said, "The Dardanelles Report is sickening reading. It shows there was no proper organisation to carry on the war. The Imperial Defence Committee faded into the Dardanelles Committee, and the Dardanelles Committee into the War Council. The functions of the two last-named bodies were never defined, nor were their relations with the Cabinet, the Admiralty, and War Office. The position of the experts who attended was also undefined. The Report shows that the members of the Committee or Council held one view as to the duty of the experts when in attendance and that the experts held another." Carson replied, "The whole thing is terrible. My wife said to me this morning, 'Now I have read that Report I know why you could not sleep when you were in Mr. A.'s Government!' And," said Carson, "I could not. As I lay awake I could picture those gallant men, and the mental picture was accompanied by the knowledge of the horrible mismanagement." I said, "L. G. should really have resigned before he did. This shows the inadvisability of giving advice without an accurate knowledge of the facts, or of asking it without stating them. When L. G. asked the opinion of his friends, they did not realise the true state of affairs and the impossibility of reform while Mr. A. was in power."

CARSON: That is quite true, and I fear that even I who knew the facts was partly responsible for saving Mr. A.. Had I pressed, I think that L. G. and the Conservatives would have resigned when I did.

Winston asked me to call at Cromwell Road. Had tea with him. Long talk about the Dardanelles Report, as to which he wrote a letter to L. G. which I undertook to deliver.

17TH.—Lunched and played golf with L. G., the L.C.J., and Donald; the first game L. G. has played for about four months. The L.C.J. told me that he no longer works at the Treasury. He and the other judges feel it necessary to abstain from executive work, as they form the only shield between the people and the constantly growing power of the Government in all its varied functions. We talked of the Russian Revolution.<sup>1</sup> L. G. says he fears that Russia is not sufficiently advanced for a republic. The position is an anxious one; the elements involved are so various and antagonistic.

24TH AND 25TH.—At Brighton with the P.M., Mrs. L. G., Olwen, Megan, and the Lord Chief Justice. L. G. spoke much of the difficulties of his task. He said, "It is a terrible responsibility."

28TH.—Dined with Albert Illingworth, the Postmaster-General<sup>2</sup>—a very shrewd man of business. He has a poor opinion of the War Office organisation.

30TH.—Arthur Lee,<sup>3</sup> Director of Food Production, and others to dinner. Lee says that this year he will be able to increase the acreage under production only by some 400,000 acres.

He told us that when repairing his house—Chequers, formerly the home of Cromwell's daughter—on stripping the paper off the walls in one of the rooms he discovered a small oak door leading to a small cupboard, in which a mask of Cromwell's face was strapped against the wall. It had been missing for two hundred years.

<sup>1</sup> The Tsar abdicated on March 15th and was arrested on March 21st.

<sup>2</sup> Now Lord Illingworth; Postmaster-General, 1916-21.

<sup>3</sup> Now Lord Lee of Fareham; Director-General of Food Production, 1917-18.



## Chapter XXXII

*Germany feeling the pinch—America comes in—Our shipping losses—Unrest among munition workers—The future of the working-classes.*

APRIL 1ST, 1917.—Dined with L. G. at Walton. He had been busy preparing his evidence for the Dardanelles Commission. I said, "Your suffrage speech in the House of Commons was very good."

L. G.: Yes, although I say it, it was. The best I have made in the House of Commons for some time.

R.: Did you prepare it?

L. G.: I just dictated a few notes in order to get the run of the thing in my head—I always speak best without full notes. Bonar Law was very nervous of the old-fashioned Tories, but Balfour was entirely with me.

R.: You propose to omit proportional representation?

L. G.: Yes; you cannot make such a change in a big war. And I am not sure about it. The result would probably be to introduce an enormous number of cranks into the House of Commons.

R.: If you had an election, how would you stand? Would not most of the sitting Members be returned, probably on the representation that they would support you in the war?

L. G.: I should make it quite plain to the Liberals and the Labour people that they would have to undertake to support me against Asquith or anyone else, and that I should run candidates against those who were not willing to give such an undertaking. I am told that I could rely on securing the adherence of at least 150.

R.: The Nonconformists are very bitter concerning the proposed State purchase of the liquor trade. Robertson Nicoll, Dr. Clifford, and others are vowing vengeance.

L. G.: I see that the *British Weekly* is full of it. It is unfortunate that Astor failed to issue to the Press a full report of

the deputation which I saw last week from Scotland. I was asked both by the Prohibitionists and the Labour people to receive a deputation. I saw them together.

R.: Many of the Prohibitionists are very fond of their champagne. They want prohibition for other people. I don't like your purchase scheme. Many businesses are being ruined. Why should the brewers and publicans be the only persons to be compensated? And there are many other objections.

(At this someone came in and so the conversation was interrupted. I thought L. G. was perhaps not sorry.)

L. G. read with great effect a letter which he wrote to Grey in February 1915 regarding the Eastern question. A significant and far-sighted letter. We talked at length on the naval and shipping situation, which L. G. regards as very menacing, but says he thinks he can see his way to feed the people until the spring of 1918. He remarked, "We want to find a genius who can discover some method of destroying the submarines. Where we are to look for him it is difficult to say."

R.: Are there any able young men coming on at the Admiralty?

L. G.: Yes, — is a first-class man, I think. I have been much impressed by him. I wonder if America will come in this week? It would be the best piece of luck we have had for some time. But I fear Wilson will only half come in. The Germans are feeling the pinch. They are short of oils, fats, and rolling stock. Their incursion into Russia was a costly business for them.

R.: Do you think they are likely to have a revolution?

L. G.: I don't. But I believe that if Bethmann-Hollweg could get a constitutional Government, which is what he wants, it would be easier to make favourable terms. By the way, Beaverbrook was here to-day. He has written an account of the crisis, and very good it is. Carson comes out well.

5TH.—Called at Downing Street. While I was talking to Sutherland,<sup>1</sup> one of the secretaries, in came the P.M.—full of high spirits. He gave a humorous exhibition of the doings of

<sup>1</sup> Now the Rt. Hon. Sir William Sutherland; private secretary to Mr. Lloyd George, 1915-20.

a deputation he had seen in the afternoon; his imitation of the Scottish speakers most amusing. He is very proud of an expedient he has discovered for dealing with deputations. He sees two holding contrary or different views at the same time. "The poison and the antidote," as I said to him. "Yes," he replied, "a regular chemist's shop. To-day the clerical Scots arrived. When they came they found the Scotch labour leaders and working-men." L. G.'s imitation of a burly labour leader criticising one of the Scotch employers was immense.

L. G. invited me to go upstairs to dinner. It was served in the great dining-room. So far as the food, service, and appointments were concerned, it looked as if a small suburban household were picnicking in Downing Street—the same simple food, the same little domestic servant, the same mixture of tea and dinner. And yet with all that an air of simple dignity and distinction pervaded the room—no affectation, no pretension, nothing mean, nothing ignoble. Mrs. L. G. is a quiet, dignified woman and brave as a lion.

L. G. spoke in high terms of Wilson's speech.<sup>1</sup>

L. G. is to speak on Thursday at the American Luncheon Club. The Americans in London are delighted and thanked me for my share in making the arrangement. L. G. says that David Davies, M.P., who went with Milner to Russia, sent home more useful and accurate information than any other member of the party. He foreshadowed the revolution, whereas Milner and the others were of opinion that nothing was likely to happen.

The conversation turned on personal qualities. L. G. remarked, "I have one quality which I never get credit for. I am one of the most patient men in the world." The whole family agreed he was patient in big things, but strongly protested that he was often impatient in small ones. To which he laughingly assented.

We talked much of the submarine menace. L. G. thinks that American intervention will improve matters. He said this eagerly, and evidently the wish is father to the thought.

Called to see Carson at the Admiralty. Discussed form of letter to be sent to the Press. He is to revise that drafted by

<sup>1</sup> The United States declared war on Germany on April 6th, 1917.

me. He still takes a gloomy view and thinks his colleagues too optimistic. He says the Germans are putting out more submarines than we are destroying, and that if the war continues the results must be very serious.

We discussed at length the form of figures published regarding arrivals and sailings. I pointed out that the public are misled, as they believe the figures relate exclusively to overseas traffic, whereas they include every arrival and sailing from a British port. They therefore in some cases comprise three or four sailings and arrivals of the same ship. Carson admitted this, and said the primary object of the figures was to show how many ships passed each week through the danger zones. He referred to the strain of his work due to the frequent losses of our ships, and said that he often left the office absolutely worn out. He thinks L. G.'s energy and spirits wonderful, and inquired to what I attributed them. I replied, "Temperament, and the ability to take short snatches of sleep when exhausted."

May 12TH, 1917.—Golfed with L. G., Reading, and Donald at Swinley Forest. L. G. looked tired, but laughed and joked as usual. He gave an affecting account of his conference with the French. When he arrived in Paris they were in the depths. After his speech at the Conference, Nivelle, Pétain, and the rest shook hands with him and thanked him for what he had said and for the encouragement he had given. "They are like children," said L. G., "delightful and wonderful children—brave, brilliant, and resourceful, but children all the same. And that is why I love them as I do. The time has come for someone to point out that France entered this war for the sake of Russia, and that Russia is acting a mean part to leave her in the lurch. I am not sure that I am not the man to say it."

L. G. said that the temper of the House of Commons in the secret session was admirable. The naggers kept quiet, as there was no chance of publicity. Winston made an excellent speech. He put his points well.

We talked of Geddes' appointment at the Admiralty.<sup>1</sup> L. G. said he believes that Geddes will double the output of mercantile shipping.

<sup>1</sup> Sir Eric Geddes has recently been appointed Navy Controller.

In the evening I sat next to Sir Joseph Maclay,<sup>1</sup> the Shipping Controller, at the Newspaper Press Fund dinner. He said some plain things about the shipping position. He approves of appointing a Controller of Shipping Construction, but thinks L. G. has made a mistake in not appointing a ship-builder or someone who understands shipbuilding. Maclay added, "It is useless to talk of the necessity for ships, ships, ships, unless you take the proper steps to get them." He has written to L. G. to that effect. He thinks the position very serious and that the people should be told the truth. He is of course all for stopping beer and rationing the people. I said, "You would be adopting a dangerous expedient in doing the former."

Maclay spoke strongly about the pledges given by the Government to Labour, and said they can no longer be performed owing to altered conditions. He spoke highly of Bonar Law. A few days ago Maclay called to see him. Maclay said, "You are looking better than you did yesterday." "Yesterday," replied Bonar Law, "I was in hell; I thought my boy was dead. To-day I am in the sunshine once more; I know he is safe."

Lord Aberconway sat next to Maclay. I asked them both whether they would like to live their lives over again. Aberconway at once said, "Yes," while Maclay at once said, "No"—which shows the force of temperament.

13TH.—Sir James Stevenson tells me that Bonar Law is about to give up his position as Chancellor of the Exchequer. L. G. called upon Montagu and said that he intended to offer him the position. Later on he told Montagu that Bonar Law had insisted upon a Conservative being appointed, and that Austen Chamberlain was to have the position. He offered the India Office, now held by Austen Chamberlain, to Montagu, but the latter is not disposed to accept.<sup>2</sup> Stevenson got his information as to the offers direct from Montagu.

15TH.—Met Admiral Sims, the American Admiral, at dinner. He referred to the terms of L. G.'s speech at the American Luncheon Club, which he said the Americans did

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Maclay; Shipping Controller, 1916-21.

<sup>2</sup> He did, however, accept and remained at the India Office until 1922.

not understand at the time. (L. G. said that the United States had come to the succour of the Allies.) Now that the Americans know the serious position of the Allies, they appreciate why he spoke thus. The Admiral is an interesting man—very frank and well-informed.

17TH.—Met General Robertson and Lord Derby at Downing Street. They were waiting to attend the War Council and evidently fretting at the delay. Robertson told me that the War Council, and in particular the P.M., have too much to do. The arrangements for carrying on the war have improved, but are not yet what they should be. Robertson says the French position is serious and requires constant attention. It is most unsatisfactory that the P.M. should have to make such frequent journeys to France. Robertson thinks some person of position should be appointed to represent the P.M. as a sort of liaison officer. At present we have no proper representative in France.

18TH.—I had a long talk with Winston Churchill. He is to lunch to-morrow with L. G. at Walton and said he regretted I should not be there. He thinks that L. G. should endeavour to get Asquith into the Government, but does not know whether Mr. A. would be willing to join. He thinks also that General Smuts should be elected a member of the War Council. He described him as the "only unwounded statesman of outstanding ability in the Empire." By "unwounded" he meant the only one who is fresh and bright, unwounded mentally and physically.

20TH.—Dined with L. G.. Sir James Stevenson of the Ministry of Munitions came to discuss labour questions. L. G. said he had been on the telephone to Sheffield and had returned a firm answer. The strike was settled yesterday in most other districts. L. G. spoke strongly regarding the action of the engineers. Sir James pointed out that there was much to be said for the men and that L. G. was wrong in assuming that the trade-union view was due to unworthy motives. He urged that the chief causes of unrest and dissatisfaction were: (1) suspicion and distrust of the undertakings by the Government and the capitalists, (2) knowledge that the employers are taking advantage of the war to intro-

duce cheaper labour which they hope to retain after the war, (3) the huge fortunes made by ship-owners and others, (4) the high prices of food and other essentials, (5) interference with trade-union privileges which have been built up after years of agitation.

L. G. argued strongly that everything must be subservient to the war and that the working-classes must be patriotic and trust the Government.

23RD.—Sir James Stevenson lunched with me. He says Addison was furious at the statement that L. G. had settled the strike. The settlement was effected by Addison. A memorandum for publication was sent to Downing Street for approval. On Monday L. G. said that Addison had been unfairly treated, and made an explanatory statement in the House of Commons.

Have been busy this week protesting against the silence regarding the exploits of the English, Scotch, Irish, and Welsh troops. By communications with the War Office and the newspaper editors a change has been effected.

26TH.—L. G. lunched with me at the Golf Club and we played a round, in the course of which he made a noticeable remark. I said that a Tory had told me that L. G. had been raised up by Providence for the purpose of the war, and that, much as he had disagreed with him before the war, he was now all for him, etc. The usual thing. L. G. laughed and said, "Later on they may disagree with me more than ever they did before." Perhaps he is meditating huge schemes of social reform. No such opportunity has ever occurred in the history of the world. It may well appeal to his imagination—the reshaping of mankind. It will be interesting to see whether these attempts will share the fate of all other schemes to create a machine-made world. L. G. prides himself on his schemes far more than on his executive performances. I think his executive powers his strong point. His courage, patience, tenacity, energy, tact, industry, power of work, and eloquence combine to make him an administrator of the first order. And to these should be added his charm of manner, his power of observation, and his ruthless method of dismissing inefficients. These qualities are especially valuable at a time of emergency like the

present. He sees something to be done, and he does it well and quickly. His schemes are another matter.

I mentioned Asquith's speech in the House of Commons, in which he referred to the necessity for revising nineteenth-century ideas concerning labour. A strange change. L. G. said he had read this speech with amusement, remembering what Mr. A.'s attitude towards labour had always been.

R.: Take for example the great fight for the Miners' Minimum Wage Bill—the 5s. and the 2s.

L. G.: Mr. A. was resolute. He would have nothing to do with the statement of definite increases in the Act. He would rather resign. He regarded the working-classes as a separate race from the intellectuals. Now he has changed his tune.

R.: Nineteenth-century ideas are to be revised. A late conversion due to a heavy high-explosive bombardment of the Asquithian position.

JUNE 2ND, 1917.—Lunched and golfed with L. G., who was full of fun and in very good spirits. When I telephoned to him in the morning he answered the telephone himself, but in a mock voice. I said, "Who are you, sir?" He replied, "One of the men from Downing Street. You seem a gruff sort of individual," etc..

Much talk of the appointment of a successor to Lord Devonport as Food Controller. I told L. G. that the sugar queues were causing grave discontent and that sugar distribution called for immediate reform. The working-classes are angry that their wives and families should be compelled to undergo this trouble and indignity, while the wants of the rich are supplied much as they were before the war.

3RD.—Dined with L. G., who was busy listening to the guns on the French Front, which he still says he can hear plainly, as I fully believe he does.

After dinner L. G. sang Welsh hymns with much vigour and feeling, commenting upon each in his usual interesting way.

4TH.—L. G. was to have played golf with me, but slept in the veranda at his house for two hours instead. In the afternoon General Smuts came down. L. G., Smuts, and Philip Kerr walked to the top of the hill overlooking Reigate, and



then came on to tea with me at the Golf Club. Mrs. L. G. also.

We had much interesting talk about the future of the working-classes after the war. All were agreed that drastic changes in the social fabric would be proposed. Smuts evidently regards the working-classes from the point of view of the soldier-lawyer. He remarked that there are times when it is necessary to interfere to save the working-classes from themselves, e.g. by forcibly removing agitators. I asked him whether he found the law irksome after he had been soldiering in the Boer War. He said, "No. I love my profession, and at once settled down into, I am glad to say, a large practice." He has a fine head and beautiful hands, which are remarkably well kept.

9TH.—Lunched with L. G. at Walton. He said he had just called a Cabinet to consider this morning's air raid on London. He spoke much of Robertson Nicoll's attitude in the *British Weekly*. This is obviously causing him some perturbation. I said, "Nicoll is angry about your proposals to purchase the drink trade."

L. G. replied that he would come to no decision until after the Committee had reported. The terms might prove quite impossible. Both parties are annoyed. Nicoll and Co. on the one hand, and Astor, the protagonist of purchase, on the other. He did not intend to embark on any scheme which is not essential as a war measure. More beer will now be brewed. That will relieve the situation and thus render the proposals for purchase unnecessary. I had better tell this to Nicoll. It was useless for L. G. to see him again. When they last met at L. G.'s house at lunch, he saw that Nicoll was excited, so did not argue with him.

10TH.—Dined with L. G., who says that the effects of the raid were not very serious. The difficulties of defence are due to the shortage of aeroplanes. We have not enough to go round. Haig wants the machines in France—French wants them here! Haig lent French a squadron recently, but on Thursday Robertson ordered them to France. The shortage is due to Asquith's vacillation last year, when he delayed the settlement of the disputes between the Navy, the Army, and the Air Board. The matter was conducted as if it were a

Chancery suit with long pleadings drawn by Curzon and Balfour.

R.: Petitions, answers, rejoinders, surrejoinders, rebutters, surrebutters.

L. G.: Yes, and applications for time and voluminous speeches. I said to Mr. A. we must have a decision. It may not be the best, but let us decide something and get on. Now we are suffering the penalty and cannot very well tell the people the facts.

When I arrived I found L. G. dictating what he described as a most important memorandum. He did not say what it was, but I gathered it related to the general war situation. Painlevé<sup>1</sup> is coming to London this week.

L. G.: He must come here. He loves this place. On this balcony we arranged to depose King Constantine.<sup>2</sup> Painlevé sat where you are seated now, and I sat here.

L. G. then read out some of the Foreign Office telegrams, on which he commented as he went along. He says that the French are displeased with Poincaré, which is unfortunate, and that they want us to take over more of the line.

11TH.—Dined with L. G.. The Donalds came. Much talk about the nightingale—the P.M. insisted that he heard one singing. This was violently contradicted by Mrs. L. G. and other ladies present. In the absence of an authority on nightingales the dispute remained unsettled.

16TH.—Lunched with the Donalds. L. G. there also. Likewise Franklin Bouillon, the French M.P.. L. G. drew an amusing comparison between the French and the Welsh. The French never say quite what they mean. At the recent conference, when it was decided to remove King Tino, the French Ministers were very guarded in what they said as to their intentions, but, knowing the resemblance between the French and the Welsh, L. G. quite understood that drastic action was meant. Franklin Bouillon was much amused and laughed heartily. L. G. spoke highly of Painlevé and expressed the hope that he and Briand would not oppose each other. F. B. said there was no cause for anxiety. They would work in

<sup>1</sup> French Minister for War, March–September 1917.

<sup>2</sup> In June 1917.

harmony. L. G. inquired whether Viviani was really a great orator. Franklin Bouillon replied that Viviani wrote out all his speeches and committed them to memory. His oratory was of the formal type, which Franklin Bouillon thought unsuitable for such a time as this. He said that Viviani was a man who thought that all the problems of life could be settled by altering the sequence of words.

## Chapter XXXIII

*Winston in office again—L. G. talks of going to America—The anxieties of office—Mr. Henderson resigns—L. G.'s qualities and defects—The soldiers' opposition to his plans.*

JULY 17TH, 1917.—L. G. made his speech to the Press—well planned, well phrased, and full of secret information. He asked me to have tea with him afterwards. We discussed forthcoming changes in the Government. The P.M. said he must have more support. Carson's judgment was good and would be very helpful in the War Council. Geddes would, he thought, do well at the Admiralty, and Winston was coming in also.

19TH.—Called on Winston at Eccleston Square by arrangement. Told him frankly the position in regard to the Ministry of Munitions,<sup>1</sup> viz. that most of the leading men are in a state of mutiny, and that resignations are imminent. I sketched principal figures at the Ministry and advised Winston to consider formation of an Executive Board, which would meet daily under his chairmanship or that of the Under-Secretary. He seemed much surprised at the state of affairs, thanked me for the information, and discussed a proposed scheme of re-organisation, which he seemed to regard favourably. He also telephoned to his secretary at the Ministry asking him to arrange appointments for the following day with the leading men. I urged the necessity for seeing them at once in view of their disgruntled condition, which would probably be intensified by his appointment.

21ST.—I hear that Winston has interviewed the Munitions people on the lines I suggested, but what reforms he is going to effect I have not yet heard.

Lunched and golfed with L. G., who says that Mr. A. is very anxious to get back into power.

SHORTLY BEFORE GLASGOW SPEECH.—Robertson Nicoll is

<sup>1</sup> The appointment of Mr. Churchill as Minister of Munitions was announced on July 17th, 1917.

still vehement against L. G. on the purchase of the liquor trade. He prophesies that this scheme will alienate many of L. G.'s oldest and best friends and perhaps bring the Government down. He charges L. G. with treachery in regard to the drink business.

29TH (SUNDAY).—Spent the afternoon with Winston at his new house near Lingfield, with which he is much pleased. He thinks the war is going badly for the Allies and that they should mark time until next year, when the Americans will be ready. Winston painted while he talked, and seems to have progressed in the former art. He showed me his potato field with pride, and explained that he had helped to plant and cultivate it. His knowledge of such matters had plainly been very limited. In fact he said so.

30TH.—At L. G.'s suggestion have taken Great Walstead, Lindfield, Sussex, for a month, so that he may get some short holidays and at the same time keep in touch with his work. He came there on Friday (27th) straight from the Paris Conference. He says the Russian situation is very serious and that some of the French troops are indisposed to go on with the war. He strongly favours an attempt to make peace with Austria and Turkey, but thinks that to be effective it must be preceded by a military success against one or both. He spoke in this sense at the Paris Conference. He said that the Allies were showing no imagination in dealing with altered conditions: "No more imagination than there is in my thumb"—launching that member out at his audience. Haig was not there, but the other generals who were, with the exception of Pétain, expressed disagreement. The Italians were especially perturbed, as they look to annexation, etc.. Pétain agreed with L. G. and remarked afterwards, "While you were speaking our eyes met in assent." The Italian Prime Minister, Painlevé, and others are to stay with us on Wednesday for a further conference. In discussing the choice of an interpreter, L. G. said, "When I speak to a particular man I consider what words will be best suited to appeal to him. I want the interpreter to use my very words. I don't want him to convey only the sense of what I say. That is not enough."

R.: The appropriate word is one of the arts of life. How

few fathers give their sons the benefit of their experience in such matters. Have you, for example, given your sons any advice on such topics?

L. G.: I can't say that I have. My old uncle taught me much by example. He was a tactful old boy. His tact was due to the only effective impulse—the desire to put people at their ease, and to make those with whom he came in contact happy.

On Sunday we visited Winston at Lingfield. He had just returned from Dundee and gave us a minute account of his doings. He said he proposed to reorganise the Ministry on the lines discussed when I called to see him on the day of his appointment. He has evidently been working hard to master the work of his new Department and displayed considerable knowledge of the situation. He pointed to the necessity for proper co-ordination between the Departments using steel and other materials, so that a programme might be agreed upon, having due regard to the supplies available. The P.M. agreed upon the necessity for this reform. Winston read cablegrams from Northcliffe, with whom he was now upon terms of intimate association. From them and other documents to which he referred, it appeared that the Americans are doing badly. Their constructional policy is said to be defective and ill-planned. L. G. agreed, and remarked that the situation in U.S.A. was far from satisfactory. He referred to a cablegram received from T. P. O'Connor, in which it was stated that the Irish-Americans are strongly antagonistic to this country and that the pro-German element is still rampant; also to an article in the *New York American*, in which it is regretted that American statesmen are neglecting American interests and comparing them unfavourably in this respect with L. G.. The article suggests that Great Britain is working for her own hand and that the Americans are pulling the chestnuts out of the fire for her benefit, etc..

Winston said he was of opinion that the present state of affairs urgently demanded one of two things—a British campaign by L. G. to endeavour to induce this country to increase its efforts during the next twelve months, or an American campaign to endeavour to induce the Americans to expedite their preparations. For the latter it would be necessary for

L. G. to go to America. Wilson is all-powerful, and prolonged conferences between him and L. G. would doubtless achieve the object in view. L. G. replied that he had been thinking of going to America, but there were considerable objections.

R.: It might be dangerous to leave the country for so long, and at such a time, without a head. As it is, almost all important discussions are deferred until you can deal with the subjects under discussion.

L. G.: Quite true. The Cabinet will not undertake the responsibility.

(Later he remarked, "How few people have the courage to take decisions"—to which I replied, "And fewer still to act upon them when taken!")

Both L. G. and Winston regard the situation as serious owing to the Russian breakdown.

AUGUST 2ND, 1917.—Motored with L. G. to Great Walstead. Found Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Milner, and General Smuts there already. Baron Sonnino, the Italian Foreign Minister,<sup>1</sup> arrived shortly afterwards. After dinner I retired so that they might confer. They sat until 11 o'clock, after which we went into the grounds to hear the guns, but for once they were silent. Sonnino, Smuts, and I had a long chat at dinner. Sonnino said, "The world does not appreciate the magnitude of the events that are taking place. That will be seen only by those who succeed us."

SMUTS: We are beginning to revise our perspective already. We have attached too great importance to inconsiderable things.

SONNINO: We have been looking through coloured glasses.

R.: Now we are at one of the crises in history. One of the milestones—Hannibal, Alexander the Great, Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, the war of 1917; but this crisis centres in no one individual.

We then talked of the early ages at which these men had done their work. Both Sonnino and Smuts think that Hannibal was one of the greatest of them all. Smuts spoke of the projected air service to South Africa in four days, the travellers to sleep at an hotel *en route* each night, and described in

<sup>1</sup> d. 1922.

a dramatic way the change which this would work in the world.

The conversation then became general. They talked of the success of the Scotch. L. G. said that whatever might be remarked of other things, the English were pre-eminent in poetry. A great feat for an unimaginative people.

Afterwards I talked alone with Smuts, who told me that the War Cabinet is snowed under by papers and details, and that some drastic revision of the organisation was necessary. There is no sufficient delegation and Ministers have no time to think out the really great problems of the war. At the end of the week the mind is in a haze owing to the number and complexity of the problems which have arisen. He returned to London by car, leaving about 11. He said he prefers to go to bed late and rise late. The others stayed the night and resumed their conference at 8.30 breakfast. We all left at 9.30.

L. G. spoke again of his accession to the Premiership. He said, "They did not think I should have the patience and, when the time came, the courage. I never rushed the situation. But when the time arrived I was as firm as a rock. I never hedged. Ask Beaverbrook to show you his account of the crisis; it is really a remarkable document and fairly correct. Of course it magnifies Bonar's part, but you must allow for that."

R.: Mr. A. made a mistake. He thought that neither Bonar Law nor you could form a Government.

L. G.: Yes, that is correct.

L. G. thinks he would have led a happier life had he kept out of politics. It is a harassing pursuit, with never-ending anxieties and trials.

R.: But you are making history all the time. Particularly just now. Your name will go down to history like Pitt's. One hundred years hence they will be talking of Lloyd George.

L. G.: It is very curious, one rarely thinks of that. You do your work; you make your speeches; you attend conferences; but it never occurs to you that you are making history. At least I never think of it except when I go to the scenes of my youth. Then sometimes I think it strange that I, who started with no ideals concerning a career, should have held



offices which were occupied by Gladstone, Disraeli, Pitt, and the other supermen of my youth.

This as we walked along the road, waiting for the mending of a tyre.

3RD.—L. G. and I motored home. He talked of his speech to-morrow to commemorate the war. He said, "I can't get my line. I don't know exactly what to say, but I think of saying . . ."

Then he delivered a magnificent little speech couched in eloquent terms in which he asked for what we had entered the war, and whether we had accomplished our ends. I said, "That is splendid—fresh and original—but you should say something to meet the growing feeling that there should be some attempt on the part of the belligerents to ascertain on what terms peace is possible."

L. G.: That is a good criticism. A fortnight ago I commented on Michaelis's<sup>1</sup> speech. I said, "Are the Germans willing to vacate France and Belgium?" He has spoken since, but he has not replied to my question. I think I will point that out. The Germans have only offered a conference. No doubt they cannot, even if they would, vacate France and Belgium; there would be too much criticism by sections of their own people.

4TH.—To L. G.'s meeting at the Queen's Hall and then with him to tea at Downing Street. Later motored to Lindfield. He again discussed the American trip, on which he seems very keen. Thinks it essential that attempts should be made to expedite American preparations. I suggested that it might be dangerous for the Prime Minister to be absent for so long at such a time. He agreed, but considered the hastening of the American preparations vital. After the excitement of the speech, he was very tired and went early to bed.

5TH.—L. G.'s vitality is remarkable. This morning he was quite fresh and full of fun. At midday came a telephone message that the Censor had passed the first instalment of Gerard's<sup>2</sup> book for publication in the *Daily Telegraph*, and that it contained a statement that the King had told the Kaiser's

<sup>1</sup> German Chancellor, July to October 1917.

<sup>2</sup> The Hon. James W. Gerard, U.S. Ambassador to Germany, 1913-17.

brother at the end of July that Great Britain would remain neutral. The editor, being nervous, had brought the article to Downing Street. On the matter being brought to the King's attention, he at once empowered the *D.T.* to deny the statement and it was arranged that the denial should be cabled to all foreign capitals. The P.M. very pleased with the result of his afternoon's work, and told with much gusto the story of the schoolboy who remarked, in an essay on Oliver Cromwell, that when the Protector was dying he said, "Had I but served my God as I have served my King, I should not be in this state."

Finished the evening by singing hymns, Welsh and otherwise, the P.M. being in great form.

6TH.—Long talk with L. G. on the war. He gave me Haig's dispatch to read, which I found very disappointing. Obviously he is not confident about the future. L. G. says that he (L. G.) wrote a memorandum a month ago in which he prophesied the practical failure of the recent offensive.

R.: There is an uneasy feeling that while we are confidently talking of smashing Germany, there is no evidence of any definite plan likely to lead to victory within a reasonable period, and that meanwhile we are steadily sacrificing ships and lives. That feeling is growing.

L. G.: I have said, and am still saying, that we must hit the enemy elsewhere. We must formulate new plans. Our soldiers have no imagination. Haig naturally has no eyes for anywhere but his own Front. He wants, very properly, to win the war there, and the soldiers at home have no genius.

In the evening came Lord Milner, M. Painlevé, French Minister for War, with him M. Hellbronn, the French Attorney-General, as interpreter. Later Sir Henry Norman,<sup>1</sup> who replaced M. Hellbronn. M. Painlevé speaks no English. He is an unimpressive little man, with anxious, inquiring eyes. After dinner they conferred until about 12 o'clock, when Painlevé and Norman returned to London by motor, as they had early morning appointments. Milner is a very pleasant, courtly person. He told me that Gladstone would not believe that Hesiod had said that the half is sometimes better than the

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for Blackburn, 1910-23; Liaison Officer of Ministry of Munitions with Ministry of Inventions, Paris, 1916.

whole, and that when the passage was produced he remarked that the renderings of these old authors were notoriously corrupt and inaccurate. He failed altogether to recognise the truth of the saying, never having acted upon it. He did everything to the full, and might have been more successful had he sometimes been content with the half. Milner remarked that the Greeks had said everything there was to be said about human nature.

11TH (LINDFIELD).—L. G. absolutely tired out. Almost too tired to eat any dinner. He said that he had had a strenuous week, what with the Allied Conference and the Henderson row in relation to Stockholm.<sup>1</sup> He added, "Thirty years hence you will be saying, 'I remember during the Great War picking nuts one Saturday afternoon at Lindfield with Lloyd George, who was Prime Minister for eight months. They were months! We did not then realise what times we were living in!'"

12TH.—Philip Kerr, editor of *The Round Table*, and now one of L. G.'s secretaries, arrived.

In the afternoon we motored to Winston's, where I invited Donald of the *Daily Chronicle* to meet us, as L. G. wanted to see him on the crisis. Winston full of energy, good-humour, and explanations of the methods for bottling a cask of claret which he had purchased.

L. G. had a long talk with Donald, which he described as "useful." In the evening L. G. and his secretaries set to work preparing his speech for the following day. I left them to it.

13TH.—Life at Great Walstead is very interesting; it brings out all phases of the P.M.'s character. He is a remarkable combination of forces; an orator and a man of action. His energy, capacity for work, and power of recuperation are remarkable. He has an extraordinary memory, imagination, and the art of getting at the root of a matter. What the military

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Henderson, a member of the War Cabinet and Secretary of the Labour Party, who had just returned from Russia, advocated British participation in an International Socialist Conference at Stockholm, at which Germany was to be represented. The Labour Party supported him, but the Sailors' and Firemen's Union refused to carry the delegates. On Mr. Lloyd George and other Ministers dissociating themselves from his attitude, he resigned.

call the *coup d'ail*. He is not afraid of responsibility, and has no respect for tradition or convention. He is always ready to examine, scrap, or revise established theories and practices. These qualities give him unlimited confidence in himself. He has a remarkably quick, alert, and logical mind, which makes him very effective in debate. He is one of the craftiest of men, and his extraordinary charm of manner not only wins him friends, but does much to soften the asperities of his opponents and enemies. He is full of humour and a born actor. His oratory has a wide range. He has an instinctive power of divining the thoughts and intentions of people with whom he is conversing. His chief defects are: (1) Lack of appreciation of existing institutions, organisations, and stolid, dull people, who often achieve good results by persistency, experience, and slow, but sound, judgment. It is not that he fails to understand them. The point is that their ways are not his ways and their methods not his methods. (2) Fondness for a grandiose scheme in preference to an attempt to improve existing machinery. (3) Disregard of difficulties in carrying out big projects. This is due to the fact that he is not a man of detail.

14TH.—Spent an hour with Lord French at the War Office. He says we are suffering from a lack of military genius. Henry Wilson, one of the best brains in the Army, is without a job, and no steps are being taken to ascertain the views of our leading soldiers. French mentioned that Asquith would not agree to the employment of Wilson, owing to the part he took in the Irish brawl. He said if French wanted to employ him, he must take the responsibility, but that he (Asquith) was opposed to it. French said he had been grossly misrepresented regarding the lack of preparation for the recent air raid on London. A letter which he had written protesting against the removal of a flotilla of aeroplanes to France had been suppressed.

Much of this I told L. G., who expressed a wish to see French and Wilson. Consequently they came to Great Walstead to lunch. During lunch French said he had recently been making a careful re-examination of the Battle of the Marne, and had come to the conclusion that von Kluck funkcd, fearing that his communications would be destroyed by the French. French is of opinion that this is the only explanation of von

Kluck's conduct. He thinks von Kluck made a mistake, and that had he pressed forward he would have won his objective.<sup>1</sup>

After lunch L. G. had a long conference with French, Wilson, and Philip Kerr. What happened precisely I have not heard, but L. G. remarked several times that in his opinion French is the biggest soldier we have yet produced in the war. Not an organiser, but a soldier.

27TH AND 28TH.—Lord Burnham and Lord Reading, M. Thomas, French Minister of Munitions, Philip Kerr, Colonel Hankey, and Professor Mantoux at Great Walstead. M. Thomas is attending the Socialist Conference in London to-morrow. L. G. was anxious to see him beforehand. The conversation was carried on through Professor Mantoux. Much talk of the success on the Italian Front reported to-day. L. G. repeated that the Italians are short of guns and ammunition. He said he had fought to get them supplies, but with poor results. Our staff would not part with any of the equipment on the Western Front. We talked of one army and one front. We had never had anything approaching that, and our prospects are being seriously imperilled in consequence. The soldiers had got into a groove. The war would never be over unless Robertson and the others could be induced to take a wider point of view. L. G. remarked that the soldiers would take no advice from a civilian; they regarded the war as their prerogative. He referred to the memoranda which he wrote in November 1916 and July 1917. He said that his forecast had unfortunately been completely justified. I said, "The difficulty is that the public regard the war as the business of experts. The soldiers are like surgeons treating a patient. If the patient's friends are dissatisfied, they can call in other advice. They cannot take over the surgeon's functions; if they do, and the patient dies under their treatment, they may be charged with manslaughter. The Government are in the same position."

<sup>1</sup> General Sir George Macdonogh, who was head of the Intelligence Service in 1914, gives a different reason. He alleges that von Kluck retired owing to a mistake in a wireless telegram he received from von Bülow, stating that his right flank was retiring on Damery, whereas it was really retiring on Dormans—10 miles farther west.

L. G. regarded this as an appropriate analogy.

L. G. put many questions to M. Albert Thomas regarding the Russian situation, which he considers more gloomy and threatening than ever. Thomas said that the fear was that Kerensky would talk a lot and do little. He, too, considers the position very serious, and doubts whether the Allies may expect much help from the Russians.

I had a private chat with Reading, who is going to U.S.A. to represent the Government in certain financial negotiations. He takes a gloomy view of the war.

L. G. slept for four hours. During the remainder of the day (28th) we all talked steadily about the war. L. G., Colonel Hankey, Philip Kerr, and I.

L. G. said that unless the war is conducted on different lines we are certain to lose it, and that unless a change is made it would be better to make the best peace possible. But he was strongly of opinion that new and better methods were available. He read extracts from his minute of July, in which he predicted the failure of the offensive on the Western Front and advocated an Italian offensive. He said that events had unfortunately proved that he was right—indeed, all the prognostications which were set forth in the memoranda prepared by him from time to time have proved correct. He added, “My warnings and suggestions have, however, been disregarded by the soldiers. All Robertson’s thoughts are concentrated on the Western Front. We are losing the flower of our Army, and to what purpose? What have we achieved? The Italians are doing well—better than was expected. If we supported them by sending them 300 guns with the necessary ammunition, we might enable them to break the Austrians and thus achieve a success which might well be the turning-point of the war. I have written urging this, and that we should suspend the offensive on the Western Front. Robertson will not agree. He is a stiff sort of man—unbending.

The sequence of events:

1. On Sunday, L. G.’s letter to his colleagues on the War Cabinet. (This I have not seen, but understand that the P.M. proposes, in short, practically to suspend operations on the Western Front, and to lend the Italians 300 guns, etc.. He

also proposes—but whether the suggestion has been put forward in this letter or not, I don't know—to reinforce the military advisers of the Cabinet by the addition of other soldiers.)

2. On Monday Kerr took the letter to London by the early train.

3. The Cabinet met. Result telephoned. Regarded as unsatisfactory. Kerr returned and reported. Further Cabinet to-morrow. Proposed that L. G. shall attend.

4. Further Cabinet. Still unsatisfactory. L. G. asks Robertson and Milner to come here. Milner arrives in the evening. Robertson is coming to-morrow (Wednesday) morning.

L. G.: The soldiers have displayed great powers of organisation and marvellous fortitude and courage, but have not shown any vision or initiative. All these great offensives have been failures, and one hesitates to think how many glorious lives have been sacrificed. It is hard to make such a criticism, but it is true. The generals have done their best. They have done all they knew.

Milner arrived about 8. L. G. had a long private talk with him on what had taken place at the Cabinet. The conversation was subsequently continued, L. G., Milner, Hankey, Kerr, and self being present. Milner said that Robertson had attended the Cabinet to-day. He was obviously tired mentally and physically—no doubt sad and disheartened at the breakdown of his plans. It was to be regretted that this discussion had been necessary at the beginning instead of at the end of Robertson's holiday. He (Lord M.) agrees with L. G., but thinks the Western operations must not be stopped with a jerk for fear of the effect on the Germans. I said, "For fear also of the effect on the nation, who do not understand the position."

When L. G. had gone to bed, I asked Milner what he thought of the dispute. He said he agreed with the P.M., but that it was most unfortunate that the P.M. and Robertson are so antipathetic and have no confidence in each other. I asked him how Bonar Law regarded the matter. "In his heart of hearts," said Milner, "he agrees, I think, with L. G.."

During the evening Milner was busy drafting a telegram to the Italian Government for submission to Robertson to-morrow.

29TH.—Robertson and General Maurice arrived about 11 a.m.. L. G. saw them alone first of all and later with Milner. The interview was of a friendly character. I was in an adjoining room with Hankey and Kerr. Lord Milner told us that Robertson had agreed to a telegram being dispatched to the Italians inquiring whether we could assist them, but indicating that this might seriously hamper our operations and that therefore they should not call upon us unless the assistance was required and would, if provided, afford a reasonable prospect of further successes of an important character. Robertson said this message of course involved the provision of further assistance if the Italians answered both questions in the affirmative, but that this was a matter of policy for the Cabinet. Hankey told me that Maurice had stated that the War Office had worked out detailed plans for assisting the Italians, and that the Staff were of opinion that effective assistance could not be rendered in sufficient time. After the telegram had been decided upon, Milner hurried off with it to London saying, "I am going now. Further discussion is most inadvisable." I had a private talk with Robertson, who said, "Mr. L. G. wants to change about too much. If a thing does not do well, he wants to try something else too quickly." I answered, "We all have the defects of our qualities. A man with a quick, mobile brain like that of the P.M. is sometimes too ready to try a fresh expedient if the original plan shows signs of failure; but on the other hand, the more phlegmatic individual may be unduly obstinate. The hen who persisted on sitting on a door-knob which she took to be an egg was a fool."

ROBERTSON: It is usually easy in war to know what you would like to do. The difficulty is to decide what you can do. You must work plans out in detail to be able to judge of their practicability.

While we were with L. G. the talk turned on the necessity for holidays. Robertson said that he (Robertson) badly wanted a holiday and that the same remark applied to the Cabinet. They were all worn out and nervy. L. G. agreed, and then



they both admitted the impossibility of being long away from London. The lunch was a complete success, particularly an apple pudding, which pleased Robertson immensely. When it appeared, General Maurice remarked, "Your cook has hit a bull's-eye this time. That is the General's favourite dish." This Robertson admitted, and sent the cook his congratulations. Robertson struck me as a fine, sterling sort of a man with a clear, direct, well-ordered mind, but without much imagination and perhaps erring on the side of obstinacy—not a genius, but a man with a fine brain. No spark of fire, but real good strong stuff. Much kindly talk succeeded regarding the inadequate pay of the poorer class of officer, and an increase in the pay of the soldiers. Maurice put the case of the poor officer very well, and it was interesting to note the kindly, sympathetic look on Robertson's face while Maurice was speaking. One could see that he well remembered his own days of struggle with poverty. After lunch, Robertson left for Eastbourne, saying many nice things to me in reference to his visit. In the afternoon, L. G., Hankey, Kerr, and I motored to London, thus concluding an interesting and eventful five weeks.

## Chapter XXXIV

*A black month—Stalemate in the West—Bad news from Russia and Italy—Anxiety about shipping—Lord French urges reprisals—German peace feelers—President Wilson's working day.*

SEPTEMBER 1ST, 1917.—Played golf with L. G., who says that he is tired out and longs to get to some place where he could rest in the sunshine undisturbed by telegrams, despatches, and telephones. "Tell me," said he, "what character in the Bible do I most resemble just now?" I hazarded Moses. "No, not Moses. I admire Moses, but I was not thinking of him." Then we were interrupted, so I did not hear who it was.

9TH.—Motored with L. G., Mrs. L. G., Megan, and Philip Kerr to Criccieth. Lunched on the roadside. As we neared our destination the P.M. began to recite Welsh verses with much emphasis and feeling—all the time holding his wife's hand as if they were a newly married couple. Some of the verses that related to the spots which we passed he translated for my benefit.

At dinner he said he had had a satisfactory message regarding the provision of guns for the Italians, but that the Russian news was very bad. He had had a conference with the soldiers regarding Italy; Foch and Haig had come to London for the purpose. Haig was very fierce and Bonar Law could do nothing with him. Not a gun would he spare. "However," continued L. G., "I said, 'We all know how difficult your task is, Sir Douglas, and that you require all your guns and ammunition for your own purposes, but we want you to consider how our position has been changed by the Russian debacle and we want you to endeavour to help us by supporting the Italians.' " The result of the appeal was quite satisfactory. Haig promised to do all that he could and to make such changes in his plans as would enable him to provide the assistance required. Robertson also was most helpful. "The old boy," said L. G., "really acted remarkably well."

13TH.—An awful day with storms of rain, but L. G., Kerr, Megan, and I went for a long walk after tea. L. G. says that the Western offensive looks like being a failure and that he has received a letter from Burnham, who has been in France, telling him that there is much dissatisfaction in the Army on the subject. L. G. added, "You know what my view has been all along. It has not changed, but I have been careful to do nothing to discourage Haig. If a man wants to take a certain course you can refuse to agree, but if you do not take steps to prevent him, you must not discourage him and must give him all the assistance in your power. The Russians have spoiled our chances. A combined attack would have been a staggering blow for Germany. The Italians continue to do well, but the big attack is only now beginning to develop. Anyway, we have done our best for them by sending the guns." I said, "What will happen if the Allies cannot achieve a definite victory in France or on the Italian Front? Will it not then be a question of which side can last the longer?"

L. G.: Yes, a wearing-down contest. But other things might of course happen. The internal position of Germany and Austria may prove an important factor.

At dinner L. G. spoke of the German reply to the Pope's Peace Note.<sup>1</sup> He thinks the Germans will express their willingness to retire from Belgium and France (except Alsace-Lorraine) and Serbia, subject to the Allies giving back the German colonies. This may give rise to an awkward situation.

14TH.—Much talk and anxiety about the Russian situation. L. G. says that the condition of anarchy which prevails will demonstrate afresh to the peoples of the world that while great upheavals may be necessary, there is no alternative to organised government. Mob Law in any form is impossible. Korniloff's failure is regarded as a serious blow for the Allies, and definite news is being anxiously awaited. The situation on the Western Front is unsatisfactory; the offensive seems to have been a failure. L. G. is now considering what course to take. A fight with the soldiers seems to be imminent. L. G. thinks that our generals have displayed no great ability, and

<sup>1</sup> On August 1st Pope Benedict XV had addressed an appeal for peace to all the heads of the belligerent nations.

there are rumours that the detailed arrangements on the Western Front have not been what they should. He has evidently decided to press for a cessation of the Western offensive. He has said on many occasions that he was opposed to it and has prophesied its failure. In view of events he obviously intends to urge his own views upon the soldiers. Whether they will agree remains to be seen. If not, a battle royal is pending. Hankey has been sent for and has arrived. Milner is coming, also Carson. Hankey tells me that Ministers are so overwhelmed with work that they cannot follow the naval and military operations in detail from day to day. He has written a memorandum proposing that a Committee or some analogous body should be set up which would meet daily and would consist of say L. G., Milner, Curzon, the Chief of Staff, and Jellicoe. L. G. is now considering this. I notice that he has been reading Macaulay's essay on Clive—perhaps the greatest of all generals not trained in a military school. L. G. says that soldiers are not adaptable. The soldier is apt to sneer at the politician, but the latter is far more ready to adapt himself to fresh conditions than the former. If he did not, he would be kicked out. The soldier, on the other hand, has fixity of tenure and his training tends to make him rigid. L. G. says, as is no doubt the case, that the newspapers are badly informed concerning the war, and that the public are gradually becoming uneasy at the absence of news of a definite success on the Western Front. *The Times* has published an article commenting on the lack of information as to the progress of the campaign. L. G. does not think much of Kerensky. He has been unable to make up his mind to quarrel with his friends with whom he is not in agreement; the result is indecision and inefficiency. The Russians have asked for a conference to discuss the means and methods of carrying on the war. L. G. strongly favours it.

21ST.—To-day we visited L. G.'s old home—the cottage in which he was reared. He said that he had not been inside the house for a long period. He showed me the bedroom in which he, his uncle, and his brother used to sleep. It is a small cottage, but the upper rooms are of quite good size.

R.: What was your mother like?

L. G.: Rather a small woman but with a good figure. She had a very soft sweet voice. She was a proud woman. The village boys used to go weed-picking for sixpence. I was anxious to join them, but she would never let me do so.

R.: Had she a sense of humour?

L. G.: Yes, she could enjoy a joke, but she was shattered by my father's death. She never recovered. She was a very serious woman.

R.: Your style of public speaking is of course founded on that of the Welsh preachers. When you entered the House of Commons and came in contact with the great English orators of the day, did you try to copy them? Did you endeavour to incorporate into your own style the qualities of any particular speaker or speakers?

L. G.: No, I always avoided doing so. My old uncle had told me that oratorical copyists were never successful and had given me instances of men who had become such slavish imitators that they had even assumed the voices of speakers whom they admired. My style, such as it is, is my own—the result of my temperament and early environment.

R.: The use of symbols or allegories drawn from nature, which is the strong point of your style, was an innovation in English oratory.

L. G.: Yes, I think it was. Even John Bright did not use them. His analogies were of a more literary character.

After dinner the conversation turned on the Royal Family. L. G. expressed a high opinion of the Queen. He says that she specially shines when with her children. One Sunday he had to call at the Palace. The King and Queen were having breakfast with their family. The Queen told L. G. that one of the children—a little boy, was not well; he had lost weight badly. "He will not even eat his porridge," said the Queen. "Why won't you eat your porridge, little man?" asked L. G. of the small boy, who looked up and gloomily uttered one word only, "Lumps!" He could not stand lumpy porridge.

Much talk of the operations in connection with the Western offensive. Both L. G. and Milner consider the continuation of the offensive a mistaken policy. Asquith has been visiting Haig, and L. G. and Milner are disposed to believe

that the soldiers are preparing to defend their position by engaging the sympathies of the Opposition and the Press. L. G. and Milner spoke strongly regarding the loss of life involved in a continuation of the offensive and the inadequate results achieved. They say that the soldiers have no plan but to continue to batter the German front on the West, and that they have been holding out the same hopes and making the same promises for the last two years.

22ND.—Drove with Milner to Llandudno Junction. He said that the soldiers stand well with the public, who do not know the facts and have short memories, and that a quarrel with the soldiers would therefore involve an attack which would dishearten our people and hearten the enemy. He therefore is opposed to any such proceeding and thinks a quarrel unnecessary. He is going to London to see Robertson, and believes that the difference of opinion is capable of amicable adjustment. He thinks that by now the soldiers must recognise the necessity for an alternative policy and that it is inexpedient to continue to rely solely on the Western offensive, which in his opinion should be modified so as to conserve our troops. He fully agrees with L. G. on the general policy, but is anxious to carry the soldiers with the Cabinet, whereas L. G. rather favours more aggressive action. He has, however, agreed to adopt Milner's plan. Any breach would involve the appointment of a new Chief of Staff and Commander-in-Chief. This would be difficult, as there are no alternatives.

Hankey, Secretary to the War Council, a very able man of whom L. G., Asquith, Milner, and other Ministers hold the highest opinion, has been busy here during the past week. He is an indefatigable worker and displays great tact. He is hopeful of a successful issue with the soldiers and has already put matters in train with Robertson. Hankey says that Fisher at his best was undoubtedly the greatest of our naval and military men during recent years. He had a genius for war and did big things for the Navy. Hankey was in the Mediterranean Squadron before Fisher was appointed to the Command. He worked remarkable changes. Before his time gunnery practice was a farce; the guns near the quarter-deck were never fired and the practice was limited to 1,500 yards. Fisher

at once increased this to 6,000 yards and initiated other improvements. He also started sham fights, lectures, and essay competitions. In fact he revolutionised the squadron. His energy and initiative were remarkable, and Hankey had no doubt that had Fisher been a younger man, he would have done great things in this war. He was a foxy old boy. He told Hankey that when he received an awkward deputation, he always arranged that they should be placed in a draught. The effect was to shorten the proceedings very considerably. No man, however eager, likes to look forward to a stiff neck.

Hankey gave an interesting account of his preparations for a war. He told me how he had prepared the War Book and that all the arrangements worked with the utmost smoothness.

L. G. told me that Metternich, the German Ambassador, was most anxious to meet him soon after he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. L. G. went to lunch. He told Metternich that he (L. G.) was strongly opposed to armaments, but that we had no Army and were therefore forced to rely solely on our Navy. We could not therefore allow the Germans to approach anywhere near us in their naval outfit. " ' *Not anywhere* near us,' I told him. ' If I were satisfied that they were getting anywhere near us, Radical as I am, I should go to the House of Commons and ask for an immediate vote of £100,000,000. I should not hesitate for a moment.' I further said to Metternich, ' Why do you continue to increase your naval programme? If you are not careful you will drive this country into conscription. And you know what that would mean in the event of a war.' Metternich smiled and replied, ' But we should not wait.' After that I was struck off the visiting-list of the German Embassy. I was never invited again. They saw I was of no use to them. I told Grey about the interview. No doubt he made a note of it; I should have done so. It made a great impression on me at the time." L. G. thinks the Kaiser very able and energetic, with a great knowledge of human nature. On one occasion he had a long talk with him. The Kaiser exhibited great knowledge of what we were doing in relation to shipping affairs and also in regard to the settlement of the railway strike which L. G. had recently arranged. " If I had a railway strike," said the Kaiser, " I should call

up the military reserves. All my railway men are reservists," and then he placed his finger on the side of his nose and winked expressively.

26TH.—Dined with Smuts in his private rooms at the Savoy. Donald and Garvin there also. I said to the General, "You say that we have won the war. What does that mean?"

SMUTS: The Germans know that they have lost the war. Psychologically we have won. They know that the whole world is against them, and that although from a military point of view they may not yet be defeated, yet the longer the war continues, the worse their condition will be. Their trade, which they have built up with such assiduity, has been destroyed. They know how difficult they will find it to recover any part of their lost ground and that as the war proceeds their difficulties will increase. The Boers knew months before they were actually defeated from a military point of view that they were beaten. The Germans are in the same position.

GARVIN: It is a war of psychology.

R.: Yes, but the psychological effect of the war cannot be estimated for years. For present purposes it is a question of territories and commercial treaties. What is to happen to Belgium, to France, to Alsace-Lorraine, and to the Middle East?

SMUTS: That is quite true.

R.: The Middle East and the German colonies are going to be the difficulty. Before the war the British people did not understand the Middle-Eastern question. Had they understood it, they would not have gone to war regarding it. But being at war, obviously it is necessary to resettle the Middle East so as to prevent the Germans from dominating a huge population with a huge potential army, which would be a standing menace to the British Empire.

SMUTS: But they had the East before the war.

GARVIN AND DONALD: That may be so, but we cannot now afford to leave things as they are. Unless we settle this question, the Germans will have won the war.

Smuts made no reply.

The conversation then turned on President Wilson's declaration that the Allies would not negotiate with the Hohenzollerns or with the German military party. Smuts



said he regarded the former statement as unfortunate. The British-speaking peoples did not understand the German's view of the State, which is quite different from their own. The German regards himself as a cell in a huge organism. His ideas of liberty are quite different from ours. His ideas have been built up by generations of teaching. They will not readily be altered.

Some discussion ensued as to what was the meaning of victory. Smuts said, "Power to impose your terms on the enemy." I said this was very nebulous. The question is what the terms were to be. Obviously it would be impossible to subjugate a virile population of ninety millions.

Donald said that there was much loose talk of peace, but that it was difficult to see how peace terms could be put forward. There was no one to put them forward.

Smuts shrugged his shoulders and said, "One knows how this sort of thing happens. There are all sorts of subterranean agencies at work. Eventually some terms will be stated, but when is quite another matter."

Something was said about experts, military and otherwise. Smuts said, "I am sick and tired of experts. The experts have hopelessly broken down in the war. Their prognostications have been wrong in almost every instance."

Smuts is a very courteous man with a clear, direct mind. He said the law is a fine profession, and a wonderful preparation for political and public work, so long as the lawyer is not too stereotyped before he takes to other pursuits.

OCTOBER 3RD, 1917.—Lord French asked me to lunch at 34 Lancaster Gate. He said he was anxious to let the P.M. know certain things, but did not like to communicate with him direct:

1. That he (French) considered that reprisals should be undertaken at once. The effect would be to shake the German morale. In his opinion, this was of more importance than killing 20,000 in the field. The whole course of the war might thus be changed.

2. That an Air Department should at once be formed. In his opinion the present arrangements were most unsatisfactory and the delay in deciding upon the new Department most

unfortunate. The Air should form a separate service from the Navy and Army.

3. He directed attention to an article in the *Globe*, in effect, as he thought, a covert attack on the P.M.. In his opinion the article is inspired.

French would have given his opinion of 1 and 2 at the War Cabinet had he been asked to speak. He thinks that the War Office fails to envisage the war as it should. Its thoughts are concentrated on the Western Front; it does not realise that our battle line extends from Baghdad to Ostend. A large section of leading soldiers think with French and Wilson regarding strategic questions, but their opinion, French says, is never asked. He talked of the air raids. He said he is short of guns and that the Germans are now adopting new routes to London, that they fly high above our barrage and stop their engines so as to prevent our people from locating their aeroplanes, after which they drop their bombs and then fly off at a great height. He said that he would like to dine with the P.M. and have a chat with him.

Lord F. said that he did not understand physical fear, and that this was probably due to the fact that he had been a soldier since he was a boy. Responsibility had, however, often caused him great fear and distress. However, he had a sanguine temperament, which was a great blessing.

I communicated the message and arranged for a dinner at my house.

5TH.—The P.M. and French to dinner. The latter repeated to the P.M. what he had said about reprisals. The P.M. said reprisals had now been determined upon; and it was hard on the politicians that the people should think the delay in coming to this decision was due to them, when in fact it was entirely due to the soldiers. For some time past he had been in favour of reprisals, but had always been told that the machines could not be spared. Now, thanks to Smuts, fifty machines had been allocated specially to this task. The P.M. regretted that he had not asked French to speak at the Cabinet. He did not know his views and did not want to risk increasing the volume of opposition. French said that if he were asked his views on any subject by the Cabinet, he should say exactly what he thought.

He repeated with emphasis that he thought Robertson has concentrated too much power into his own hands, particularly as regards promotions and honours, and that, as a result, the Selections Board was almost useless. I said that Robertson had wide powers in this respect by virtue of an Order in Council made in Asquith's time. The P.M. agreed, and said it was very easy to change an administrative order, but very difficult to alter an Order in Council, which was a formal affair. The P.M. asked Lord French whether he thought General Allenby was a good soldier and suitable for his Egyptian command. French replied, "The best man you could get."

The P.M.: When Allenby came, I said to him, "If you tell me what guns and men you want, and we don't supply them, the responsibility for failure will be ours. On the other hand, if you don't tell us what you want, the responsibility will be yours." Now, (to Lord F.) do you think that Allenby will tell us what he really thinks necessary irrespective of Robertson's views? Can we rely on him to do that?

FRENCH: Unless Allenby has changed, he will certainly speak his mind.

The talk turned on Smuts's speech, which L. G. described as one of the best he had ever read. Most adroit and skilfully prepared. Lord F. said that in his opinion Smuts was the greatest of all the Boer generals.

We talked of Kitchener. F. said that K. was not the man during 1914 that he was during the South African War. He had failed both physically and mentally. The public were wrong in regarding him as an organiser. He was a poor organiser, but a great soldier with a real flair for military affairs and far better in the field than in an office. At the beginning of the war, F. called on Asquith and suggested that he should appoint Kitchener Commander-in-Chief, with F. as his Chief of Staff. Kitchener had already consented to this arrangement, but the plan was not adopted. F. thinks it would have worked well. He gave a vivid account of the first battle of Ypres, which he again described as the most critical incident in the war. He said, "We held the Germans with only a very thin line. We had no reserves. I met Haig and the other generals when the

Germans were only a mile away. It was a regular debacle. The heavy field guns were trotting. When a heavy field gun trots you may be sure things are pretty bad. I said to the generals, 'I am very sorry for you, but you must go back and fight it out. We must make a stand.' Just then someone came in and said, 'They have rallied,' I said, 'Who did it?' The answer was, 'The Worcesters.' FitzClarence<sup>1</sup> did it. He was killed a few months later, poor fellow! It was a terrible time. Had the Germans defeated us then, we should have been down and out. They would have captured the coast and cut our communications."

By this time it was 10 o'clock. L. G. said he would like to get General Wilson to come round. I telephoned. The P.M. spoke to him and he arrived in fifteen minutes. I did not join the party, as I thought they could talk more freely in my absence.

6TH.—Drove to Walton Heath with the P.M.. Philip Kerr accompanied us. On the road the talk turned on overtures for peace.

R.: The Pope's statement, in which he says that the German reply to his note means that they are prepared to give up France and Belgium, is the first step towards peace. There may be a hundred more steps, but it is the first. It is like a lawsuit which has been proceeding for some time. One day a third party suggests a settlement. That opens the ball.

L. G.: Yes. You and I as old solicitors know those rings on the telephone. This is the first that has been made public.

R.: You ought to say that in one of your speeches.

L. G.: But the effect might be to stop the telephone messages. We don't want to do that.

7TH.—Dined with L. G.. I told him I thought that both the Tories and the Liberals were on the move, and anxiously looking to the time when one party or the other would be able to seize the reins of power. Also that they reckoned on the fact that he had no party. I said, "They hope to see you suspended between earth and heaven like Mahomet's coffin." L. G. agreed, but added, "They will find that I am not in my

<sup>1</sup> Brig.-General Charles FitzClarence, V.C., commanding the First Guards' Brigade (First Division); d. December 1914.

coffin yet. They will have to reckon with me when the time comes."

15TH.—Dined with Sir Howard Frank. General O'Leary, one of the party, told me that he served with Sir William Robertson, then a junior officer, in the Chitral campaign. He says Robertson was always a clever fellow, but that he has not seen much fighting. R. met him the other day, but failed to recognise him, although they had lived and slept together for some considerable time thirty years ago.

Brade told again the story of taking to Asquith the message announcing the retreat and heavy losses of the British Army in 1914. This time Brade told the story, previously recorded in these notes, thus:

"It was at night. When I reached Downing Street the hall was full of ladies. Mr. A. saw me in the Cabinet room. He was seated at the big table in the P.M.'s seat reading Virgil or some other classic. He said, 'Is there any news?' I replied, 'Yes, this message,' handing it to him. He read it, but showed no sign of emotion beyond reading it twice over. He rarely read a document twice."

16TH.—L. G. asked me to invite French and General Wilson to dinner, but unfortunately all my servants had gone out, so he had to go to French's house at Lancaster Gate. On the following day L. G. invited me to dine, but I could not go, being already engaged. When he next met me he described me as the man who would not invite him to dine or accept his invitation to dine with him.

18TH.—In consequence of representations as to the condition of affairs in South Wales, I (R.) suggested to Carson that Smuts should go there to deliver a speech before the miners take their ballot as to whether they should strike as a protest against the Government's recruiting proposals. Carson brought the proposal before the Cabinet, who approved the idea, and Smuts agreed to go.

Winston Churchill addressed editors on the work of his Department. Before doing so he asked me to call, which I did. He outlined his speech. I made some suggestions and advised him to limit his remarks to three-quarters of an hour. He agreed, but spoke for an hour and a half.

Dined with L. G. at Downing Street.

L. G.: I was with the King to-day and spoke for an hour. My sovereign was a good listener.

After dinner I (R.) said, "The condition of the mercantile marine is the crux of the situation. The world tonnage losses this year, allowing for all recoupments, will be very serious, resulting in a debit balance of 4,500,000 tons, in addition to which American requirements will accentuate the shortage. They are said to require 6,000,000 tons for their military purposes. The first nine months of next year will be a serious time."

L. G.: Yes, the question is, however, whether the people of these islands are prepared to undergo hardships and privations in order to see this thing through. If they are, we can manage all right. I believe they will prove resolute.

KERR: The Germans are making frantic efforts for peace.

L. G.: Yes, and we must not stop their communications by publicity. The time may come when they will offer terms we can consider.

Kerr said he had had an interview with an American, a friend of President Wilson's, who had given an interesting account of the President's mode of life.

Kerr said: Apparently Wilson is a most extraordinary person. He starts work at 7 by reading the newspapers. He breakfasts at 9, and then plays a round of golf with his doctor, who watches him like a hawk. Wilson's view is that his health is of primary concern to the American people. Unless he keeps fit, he cannot expect to possess the balanced judgment which is absolutely essential for the man who has to take the momentous decisions which he has to give. After golf comes lunch. The next four hours are given up to interviewing callers. After this the President devotes himself to his official papers. Then he has dinner, and goes to bed punctually at 10. If he shows signs of wear, the doctor orders him off earlier. His speeches are typewritten by himself and put away in his drawer ready for use. He usually prepares them some time beforehand. He can, however, make very excellent extempore speeches.

L. G.: That seems very self-centred and dull.

R.: But he has managed well. He acted at the psychological moment and has carried the country with him.

L. G.: I am told, however, that he could have come in after the sinking of the *Lusitania* with greater ease than he did later.

R.: That is not what I hear from America.

The talk turned on the French political position. In L. G.'s opinion, Briand is the ablest of the French statesmen.

Philip Kerr produced some notes for L. G.'s speech on the following day. L. G. looked them through and began to make notes himself, and then retired to bed, saying, "I must now begin to work at this."

Burnham and I had tea with Winston after his speech. Burnham and I urged that mercantile shipbuilding was the crux of the situation. Winston admitted this, but insisted that purely naval requirements should have preference. He expressed the opinion that air warfare would next year show enormous developments, and prophesied that if the war goes on, this time next year devastated buildings will be a common sight in London.

19TH.—Interesting talk with Fisher<sup>1</sup> at the Education Office. He is willing to consider a modification of the clause prohibiting children from working before school hours. He is a clever man, and talks all over a subject like quicksilver.

Long talk with Sir Arthur Steel Maitland, the new Minister of Overseas Trade, and his assistant, Sir William Clark.<sup>2</sup> Sir Arthur a pleasant, courteous man, very anxious to make his job a success, but as yet without much experience of the subject. Clark very much the same. They asked my advice as to the relations of the Department with the Press, on whose behalf I was seeing them. I said, "I issue all official documents and statements to all newspapers simultaneously—general confidential statements as to policy should be made at private meetings called by our Association. Meetings with individual newspaper men are no doubt desirable, but they should be unofficial and preferences should not be given in communicating official information for publication. A Press Department should be established for the issue of departmental publicity matter and replying to questions."

20TH.—L. G. has referred on several occasions recently

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, President Board of Education, 1916–22.

<sup>2</sup> Controller-General Department of Overseas Trade, 1917–28.

to the wonderful qualities of the English—their common sense, steadiness, resolution, and imperturbability in the face of danger. Drove with him to Walton. On the way he inspected the damage caused by the Zeppelin raid last night. He gave an affecting account of what he had seen. I waited for him at the local police station while he made the inspection with Sir Edward Henry.<sup>1</sup> One woman who had nearly been killed said to him, "The Lord has been very good to us." I remarked that people who have been dragged to the edge of the precipice always thank the Almighty for not pushing them over, but that those who have been in no danger, and therefore have most to be thankful for, rarely express gratitude.

L. G. (laughing): Yes, 'twas ever thus.

Lunched and played golf with L. G., Philip Kerr, and Donald. L. G. thinks that the soldiers are trying to make use of Asquith and Co. and that there has been an informal coalition between the two. He says that even Massingham has now adopted this attitude. I repeated my view that the reconstruction of the Labour Party was an event of outstanding importance. L. G. agreed, but said that the Party would not attract all workers. I replied, "No. But on the other hand, the Capitalist Party will not attract all capitalists and intellectuals." L. G. said that the old parties are moribund. They stand for nothing. The problems which produced them have faded into insignificance.

21ST.—Dined with L. G.. Found him busy dictating his speech for the War Savings meeting to-morrow. He said that he hated speaking more than anything else he had to do. Speaking without reporters was a joy, but now that every word he said was reported, weighed, and analysed, speaking was a burden. While we were talking, the typewriter was ticking away in the next room. L. G. remarked, "As soon as that stops I shall have to resume my labours."

We talked of the condition of parties. I said, "I don't know the difference between a Tory and a Liberal nowadays."

L. G.: I agree, and that would not be a bad thing to say publicly.

<sup>1</sup> Commissioner of Metropolitan Police, 1903-18; d. 1931.



He said that Derby, Sir Eric Geddes, and Scott of the *Manchester Guardian* had been down to see him to-day. He spoke well of Carson and said he intended to say something nice about him in his speech to-morrow. I said that the political situation was very peculiar. "You [L. G.] have no party, no organisation, and no coterie of supporters. You stand almost alone. You ought to make an offensive and defensive alliance with some of the leading men and get an organisation." He agreed. We spoke of the war. I remarked, as I had often done before, that shipping would prove the crux of the situation. If the Americans can get the necessary transport, we can beat the Germans. If they can't, the Allies will be in a bad way. To this the P.M. did not assent. I think he is apt to minimise the tonnage question, which I regard as vital. The figures look serious, and I am doubtful about the replacements. I fear that the amount of new tonnage which will be available is exaggerated. The question is whether the Allies can hold out over 1918. It is a race between the submarine and our military effort.

L. G.: If the British people are prepared to make sacrifices and endure privations, we can get through all right, but they will have to do that.

R.: Apart from the loss of life, we have not yet felt the strain of war. Most people have more money and more comforts than usual.

L. G.: Perfectly true. Now will come the testing time.

27TH.—Golfed and lunched with L. G.. Very full of the Italian disaster.<sup>1</sup> As French says, the unexpected is always what happens in war. L. G. pursued here by Hankey and another officer. After lunch they retired to my room and had a conference. Things look pretty bad.

In discussing the Italian news, L. G. said, "This shows once more that the Germans have more brains in their high command than we have. Our generals have kept their eye fixed on the Western Front; they have not visualised the whole battle-field. When the Germans are in difficulties in one arena of war, they suddenly deliver a smashing blow in another. We

<sup>1</sup> The Battle of Caporetto, in which the Italians lost 250,000 prisoners and over 2,000 guns between September 24th and November 7th.

shall beat them as Napoleon was beaten. He had the brains, but he was fighting the whole world.

R.: It is like Jack Johnson fighting five hundred undergrads. He would kill half a hundred of them, but the remainder would eventually knock him out.

L. G.: Yes, they would wear him down. That is what the Allies did to Napoleon, and that is what we must do to the Germans.

28TH.—Dined with L. G.. Took with me Lincoln, editor of the *New York World*. L. G. said that Robertson had been with him to-day and was going to Italy. The news worse to-day. It looked as if the war would be a long affair. I said, "If we can get through 1918, we shall win. Tonnage is the ruling factor."

L. G.: We shall get through.

R.: If the Italians give in, we shall have another Front to protect on the West. The Germans will attack France in the South.

L. G. looked apprehensive, but said nothing.

Lincoln, a fine type of American, thinks the Americans will get their men here somehow, but speaks of 50,000 per month. I pointed out that 600,000 men would hardly meet the case. L. G. doubted if an American army of 600,000 would be available in 1918. Lincoln remarked, "The Atlantic Ocean is Germany's best ally."

L. G.: A very wise saying.

Much talk of the American preparations. Lincoln says that the American Cabinet has been practically superseded by a Committee of seven business men, some of the best in the U.S.A., who are charged with the duty of carrying out the war preparations. Lincoln much impressed with L. G.'s simplicity and geniality. He told a good story of Gordon Bennett, the proprietor of the *New York Herald*. Bennett has a number of Pekingese dogs; he says they are the only creatures who are really fond of him. He places great reliance on their judgment. If they take to a man, Bennett believes in him. If they don't, he has no use for him. One of Bennett's staff came to Paris to see him for the first time. He had heard of the dogs. When the door opened and Bennett walked in with his pets, they at

once made much of the visitor, so much so indeed that their owner was almost inclined to be jealous. However, he was much impressed and forthwith raised the visitor's salary. His favourable reception was due to the fact that he had taken the precaution to sprinkle his trousers with aniseed, of which dogs are particularly fond.

31st.—Saw L. G. at Downing Street. Congratulated him on his speech in moving resolution of thanks to the Navy and Army. He replied, "Not bad perhaps, considering I had no time to prepare it. You [R.] know how I was harassed at the week-end."

R.: Yes, it was a fine piece of work. The peroration and the passage regarding the Flying Corps were the best things in the speech.

L. G.: The Flying Corps bit was the best. This Italian business has come as a sad blow to our soldiers. As you know, I have been urging action on the Italian Front for nearly four months. You remember what took place at Great Walstead. If it should be necessary, I shall let the public know the facts.

Oct 13<sup>th</sup> 1918

Mr Jan Balfour

A. Burrum Low

Milner

Winston Churchill

Mr. Bennett: Admiral

Harry Wilson. C.I.G.S.

Reading

m. p. a. Hankey

W. B. T. T. T. T.

Philip Kerr  
Hugh Richardson

PAGE FROM VISITORS' BOOK AT DANNY, DATED  
OCTOBER 13TH, 1918, WHEN REPLY TO PRESIDENT  
WILSON'S PEACE NOTE WAS DRAFTED.



## Chapter XXXV

*New proposals for Press censorship—L. G.'s clash with Asquith—Lord Derby talks of resignation—The Lansdowne letter—L. G. in the family circle—Overcoming the submarine menace—Jellicoe resigns.*

NOVEMBER 2ND, 1917.—Met Colonel Repington of *The Times* at lunch. We had a private conversation afterwards, in the course of which he told me that Lord Roberts had been strongly in favour of our Expeditionary Force to Belgium in 1914. Roberts<sup>1</sup> came to Repington's house at Hampstead, and discussed the proposal with him at length. Repington indicated the uncertainty of success, but Roberts answered that he was so keen on the project that he intended to go to Asquith and offer to take command if the Government would allocate 150,000 troops for the purpose. Roberts was of opinion that the capture of the Belgian Coast was so important that the attempt would be worth all the risks. He said he was prepared to risk his own reputation.

3RD.—Interview with the First Lord (Sir Eric Geddes) at the Admiralty. He asked me to convene a conference of editors at which he could reply to questions on subjects arising out of his speech in the House of Commons on the 1st instant. (I had written suggesting this.) He showed me the official report of the naval battle in the Skagerak, and asked my opinion upon it. He also showed me newspaper reports which had been released by the Admiralty, which were much more detailed. I said the official report would lead the public to think that the Admiralty information was inferior to that received by the newspapers, and that the official report should have stated that certain other details (stating them) had been received, but that these had not yet been officially confirmed. Geddes admitted that this might have been desirable. I said that in preparing such notices the Admiralty should, if possible,

<sup>1</sup> d. November 1914.

give the public all the information in their possession, indicating what was definite and what indefinite.

8TH.—F. E. Smith told me that he is all for L. G., and that Alderman Salvidge, the leader of the Conservative Party in Liverpool, is also prepared to support him, as he thinks he is the only man to carry on the war.

9TH.—Geddes told me to-day that he intended to refer in his speech at the Guildhall to-night to the serious nature of the submarine campaign. He agrees that sufficient attention is not being attracted to the losses in the world's shipping. There is a tendency to limit consideration to our own losses. He agreed that shipping is the crux of the war, and asked me to request the Press to weigh carefully what he would say to-night and to point out the need for economy.

15TH.—Brade dined with me. He has had a long interview with L. G., who told him that he and Haig had had it out in Paris, but afterwards went for a walk together and parted the best of friends. L. G. cannot make out Robertson's attitude regarding new proposals. Brade tells me of new proposals for Press censorship, which he had got referred to the Admiralty, War Office, and Press Committee. Brade expects strong opposition, as proposals involve censorship of all articles advocating peace. In this I agreed. He is to send me a memorandum setting forth the proposals.

17TH.—Golfed with L. G.. Referring to his Paris speech he said, "It was necessary. I had to speak strongly to secure attention both here and in France and Italy."<sup>1</sup>

R.: The public are agreed as to the necessity for the allied War Council. Criticism is mainly directed against your observations concerning our operations on the Western Front. These may or may not have been well advised, but they are of temporary interest only, whereas the fate of the world may depend on the soundness of your plans for carrying on the war.

<sup>1</sup> In this speech Mr. Lloyd George pointed out that although the Allies had command of the seas, and resources superior to those of the Central Powers, they had failed to go far on the path to victory. The fault was not with the armies, but that they did not fight together as parts of one great whole. "We must," he added, "have unity—not sham unity, but real unity." The appointment of a Supreme Council was announced on this occasion, but it was not to receive full powers until the following February.

These will be put to the test when you come to deal with operations in detail. The staff may then display difference of opinion with the Allied Council, which may give rise to an awkward situation.

L. G.: Yes, but it will not arise just yet. There is no immediate reason why it should. The Army Council were to meet to-day. They might decide to resign in a body; that would raise an awkward problem. I don't believe that otherwise the Parliamentary critics will be troublesome. I have to prepare two speeches, one regarding the Paris speech and the other regarding America. That will keep me busy.

We talked of Northcliffe, whose letter announcing his refusal of the Air Ministry is published to-day.

L. G.: I did not see the letter until I saw it in the newspapers.

Later Kerr called to ascertain whether I knew what had taken place at the Army Council Meeting. We talked of L. G.'s speech on Monday. I said, "He should remove the impression occasioned by his remarks concerning the operations in the West. The people do not like to feel that all these gallant lives have been sacrificed unnecessarily. L. G.'s meaning requires to be made more plain. And he should indicate that his Paris speech was made primarily to steady the Allies." (L. G. had said to me, "It was necessary to say what I had to say in public. France and Italy would not believe in our sincerity unless I made a public statement of the most serious kind. If Italy went out of the war, the result would be most serious. The position is bad enough as it is. I had to do my best to reassure the Italians.") "It will also be necessary to explain why the Navy is not represented." (L. G. had told me that the Navy would be represented by a liaison officer, but that further representation was inadvisable inasmuch as the naval section of the war rests almost exclusively on our Fleet.) Kerr agreed, and added that L. G. must insist upon the necessity for co-ordination and joint action.

20TH.—Telephoned to congratulate L. G. on his triumph in the House of Commons. I said, "The crisis is over, if there ever was a crisis. I never believed that anything would happen in Parliament."



22ND.—Hills, M.P.,<sup>1</sup> head of the Labour Department at the Ministry of Munitions, asked me to advise him as to creation of a Publicity Department which would explain and defend the actions of the Ministry regarding labour matters. I advised local action by means of speakers and articles in the local papers. I indicated the necessity of working in conjunction with the War Aims Committee, on which the Ministry is represented, although Hills was unaware of this.

F. E. Smith, the Attorney-General, told me he had taken the precaution to have all his opinions as law officer printed and bound for reference, as he had no doubt many of them would be criticised after the war.

24TH.—L. G. lunched with me, and we played golf in the afternoon. He said that he received information concerning Kitchener's attempt to form an Allied Council only just before he went into the House of Commons to make his great speech. He thinks that Mr. A. would have liked to impugn the statement, but L. G. had the documents and was ready for him. Hankey dug them out of the War Cabinet archives just in time.

R.: Mr. A. opened the case like a counsel who says in consultation, "We will open tenderly, and wait and see what the other side do and how the judge and jury take the opening statement." That sort of speech is useless in times like these. The only justification for an attack is an overwhelming belief in the necessity for it and in the truth and justice of the case presented.

L. G.: Yes. He adopted the wrong tactics. His opening carried no conviction. I am glad the debate took place; it has cleared the air. I am glad I have had an opportunity of crossing swords with Mr. A.. It had to be, and it is well over. I don't often read the *Spectator* or the *Nation*, but I read them this week. They are amusing reading. Strachey has never forgiven me for calling him a pompous person, and as for Massingham, he is just like a shrieking shrew. I have had a hard week and I dread my journey to Paris on Tuesday. I hate the journey and I shall have a difficult task. I wish (laughing) that Bonar would take over the conduct of the war and let me have the House of

<sup>1</sup> Now the Rt. Hon. J. W. Hills.

Commons. I say this to him sometimes when he complains after he has had a troublesome time.

R.: What does he say?

L. G.: He prefers his own troubles. He knows that he could not run the war. He does his own job well, very well.

Later, when we were alone, L. G. told me that he had appointed Rothermere Minister for Air.

We talked of the political situation. He said, "The Liberals will have to choose whether they are going to follow me or not. There will be a cleavage. I shall have to rely upon the business classes to a great extent. I shall have to organise." He asked what I thought of a proposal to censor a pamphlet which the Union of Democratic Control wish to issue. He described it as a very clever piece of work. The author does not advocate stopping the war, but suggests that the time has come when we should discuss at home what terms of peace might be accepted. I said, "It would be difficult to suppress a pamphlet of that sort. It may be pacifist in intention, but it is not expressed as such." L. G. agreed, and said he was opposed to suppression. Such a proceeding would give rise to difficult questions, and the difficulties are likely to increase as the war progresses. L. G. stayed to tea, and I walked home with him.

25TH.—Dined with L. G.. He is to speak in Gray's Inn Hall on December 7th. We talked of the days when he lived in Gray's Inn—he said in Verulam Buildings, but I think he should have said Raymond Buildings. He said that he and his wife lived there for some years. They had a very nice set of chambers and were very happy, but he had to give them up eventually, as he could not afford to keep them. He had to get cheaper chambers.

27TH.—Long talk with Lord Derby at the War Office. Spoke with much feeling of the death of his son-in-law, Neil Primrose. He said, "The most distressing thought is that when these millions of men return, the one whose home-coming you most anticipated will not be among them." He told me that he had had a hard time during the past ten days. He had been on the point of resignation. He said, "I think I acted for the best. I should have resigned had not L. G. made certain alterations in his Allied Council scheme. But he met

me very fairly. I like him, and was glad to be able to meet him. The Army Council were on the point of resignation; it was touch and go. I was happily able to be of service in that respect. Had they resigned, I think the Government would have fallen. My resignation would have been an additional blow. I don't say I could have brought the Government down, but I think my resignation would have shaken them. The scheme was badly managed, and I think L. G.'s Paris speech was a great mistake. The effect upon the Army has been most unfortunate. They have lost confidence in their leaders and in the politicians. A feeling of unrest and anxiety has been caused. I strongly favour the idea of an Allied War Council, but should like to make it a real one, consisting of Robertson, Foch, Cadorna, and Bliss. That would have necessitated a new man to take Robertson's place, but that could have been arranged. I look to the future with serious misgivings. Personal questions count for so much. The introduction of Henry Wilson may well cause trouble. He is a friend of mine and I like him well; but unfortunately he has the reputation of being an intriguer, and I think it justified. If he wants to accomplish an object and is frustrated in a direct attack, he will endeavour to secure his object by a devious attack."

R.: Then he should make a good strategist!

DERBY: The trouble will arise when Robertson, for example, propounds some plan to our War Council which they approve. When submitted to the Allied Council they suggest an alternative which is accepted by our Council in substitution for the original scheme. Robertson will not accept the Allied Council plan and insists upon his own. What is to happen? The elements of friction are all there. However, we must hope for the best. It is unfortunate that the politicians will not try to understand the soldiers' point of view. If they did, they would save much trouble. Some members of the War Council think all soldiers fools. And they show it. L. G. is a wonderful man. He has a flair for spotting what is wrong and suggesting a remedy; but he never thinks out the details or attempts to put his scheme into operation. That has its serious drawbacks. But he has performed great services to the State. When he discovered that the transport arrangements on the Western

Front were faulty, instead of suggesting to Haig that he should get expert advice and proposing that Geddes should report, he simply said, "I am sending Geddes." For a tactful man, that was a blunder—and strangely, he always blunders when dealing with the Army.

30TH.—Lunched with the Attorney-General at Gray's Inn Hall. Much amusing talk concerning lawyers of the last generation. F. E. said that a certain judge (now dead) was often most offensive. On one occasion he was trying a case in which a boy who had been blinded in a street accident was claiming damages against F. E.'s client. When the plaintiff's counsel opened the case, the judge ordered the young man to stand up before the jury. F. E. objected, and said that if the Judge's intention was to excite their sympathy, he had better have the plaintiff handed round among the jurymen. To this the judge retorted that F. E. was insolent. To which F. E. replied, "Your Honour is insolent. I am only trying to be insolent." F. E. very gloomy about the war. He says that the Russian news is as bad as it can be.

After lunch the conversation turned on Frank Lockwood. Before he died he became very emaciated. While he was in bed a vacancy occurred on the Bench. The Lord Chancellor came to see Lockwood, who afterwards told his wife that the L.C. had come to see whether he (Lockwood) was really fit to be a Puisne (puny) Judge. He would have his joke on his death-bed.

DECEMBER 3RD, 1917.—L. G. had tea with me at Walton Heath. He said he had an awful crossing, but stood it well. He read a French novel and almost forgot he was at sea. When, however, the ship dived into the trough of the ocean the thought occurred that she might by chance strike a mine, the mines having been laid below the level of flood tide. His description of his feelings very amusing. We spoke of Lansdowne's letter.<sup>1</sup> L. G. said he knew nothing about it until he saw it in the newspapers.

R.: Did Balfour know of it?

<sup>1</sup> The famous letter in which the Marquess of Lansdowne (d. 1927) asked for a precise statement of the terms on which the Allies would make peace with a view to an early ending of the war.

L. G.: That is what I am wondering.

R.: I think he did from what Burnham said to me last night.

L. G.: Burnham is breakfasting with me to-morrow morning. I shall hear all about it then, I expect.

R.: Burnham wants me to see him this evening.

L. G.: The letter was ill-advised and inopportune. I have read it again. Lord Lansdowne advocates making a treaty with a nation whom we are fighting because they have broken a treaty. He advocates that the treaty should be enforced by a League of Nations consisting of the nations who are now engaged in attempting to enforce the treaty already in existence. A step of that sort [the letter] should not be sanctioned or countenanced without the approval of the War Cabinet. It is a serious matter.

R.: I have reason to think that Colonel House was cognisant of and approved the letter. That is a serious matter. I am told he suggested the passage as to the freedom of the seas.

L. G.: I think you may be right. Of course the time will come when it will be necessary to open the question of peace, but the moment is unfavourable. When the time arrives no doubt some of those who now favour peace will say that the time is unsuitable. It will be a big task. The pacifists favour Asquith because they believe he will be more likely to make peace than I shall be, but they are mistaken. A section of the public will no doubt want to fight on in a blind unreasoning way without any proper conception of the attainable. The point is that at the moment we could not secure favourable terms. That being so, the letter is harmful.

R.: Had Lord Lansdowne said, "The belligerents are like men fighting in a dark room. They are destroying the civilisation which they all say they are fighting to preserve. They all want peace. Why should not their respective war aims be stated?" no objection could have been made.

L. G.: No, that would have been different. Northcliffe, who was in Paris, said that had he been in London when the letter was offered to *The Times*, he would have published it accompanied by a stinging leader. I think *The Times* attack on

Lansdowne is in bad taste. They are attacking him too brutally.

R.: What did you think of Clemenceau?

L. G.: He is a fine old boy. He made a speech for about ten minutes to a party of eight of us. Very eloquent. We did a lot of work. The recent row has, I think, improved my relations with Robertson. I like him personally. He can be very amusing. He has many good stories. For example, he said that one of the French Ministers, who always gives very effusive greetings, reminded him of a subaltern who had the same habit. One day he called upon a taciturn colonel, and remarked, "I am glad to see you again, so very, very glad." The Colonel replied, "Good morning, good morning, good morning, and let that last you for three weeks."

Later, called on Burnham at the *Daily Telegraph*. He said that on Wednesday last Lord Lansdowne came to him in the House of Lords and told him he had written a letter which *The Times* had declined to publish, as they disagreed with it. He asked Burnham to accept it. He said that he (Lansdowne) had informed Arthur Balfour of his intentions and had asked him to read the letter, as he (Lansdowne) had no wish to publish anything that the Foreign Office might regard as harmful. Balfour replied that he was leaving for Paris and that Lansdowne had better show the letter to Hardinge, who had his complete confidence and knew his views. Lansdowne accordingly took the letter to Hardinge, who said he saw no objection to it, but on the whole thought that publication would be advantageous. Lansdowne said that he had also discussed the letter with Colonel House on several occasions, and that he was favourable to publication. Lansdowne handed the letter to Burnham, who said he would publish it, although he differed with much that Lansdowne had said. After Bonar Law had made his speech condemning the letter, and, as Burnham thinks, impliedly condemning the *Daily Telegraph* for publishing it, Burnham saw him and complained that the Government should have acted in this way in view of Hardinge's approval, which had been a vital factor in Burnham's decision to publish. Bonar Law replied that he was unaware that Balfour and Hardinge had been consulted, and that he regretted if any-

thing he had said in his speech could rightly be construed as a condemnation of the *Daily Telegraph*. Burnham said he was disposed to publish a paragraph stating that publication had been authorised by the Foreign Office. Bonar Law begged him not to do so, and asked him not to tell L. G. that Balfour and Hardinge had been consulted, as this would only occasion trouble. Burnham declined to agree, and said he should certainly state the facts to L. G.. Burnham also saw Lord Robert Cecil, who said he was ignorant of the facts concerning Balfour and Hardinge.

I suggested that Burnham should take no action beyond stating the facts to L. G.; but that if the Government do not propose to make the facts public, he should ask Bonar Law for a letter stating that publication was quite justifiable in view of Hardinge's consent, and that in abstaining at the request of the Government from making this fact public he was subordinating his own interests to those of the nation. Burnham acquiesced.

4TH.—Everett of Pearson's<sup>1</sup> told me that the Lansdowne letter was discussed at a dinner at which Lords Lansdowne, Loreburn, Morley, and Curzon were present, together with Colonel House and F. W. Hirst, formerly editor of the *Economist*. Curzon is stated to have said that while he did not agree with all that was in the letter, he thought it should be published.

9TH.—Lunched with L. G. at his house at Walton. We talked of peace terms. L. G. said we should have to secure some territory to compensate us for what we had expended. France would want Alsace-Lorraine. The time for peace had not arrived, but it would come—he hoped before long.

R.: Our position at the end of next year will not be favourable unless the unexpected occurs, which may well happen. We shall have lost more of our shipping, our foreign trade will have disappeared, and our debt will have increased by another 3,000 millions. Naturally the Americans desire to make America the first nation in the world. At the end of 1918 they will hold all the gold in the world; they will have a huge mercantile fleet, which they have never had before; and they

<sup>1</sup> Now Sir Percy Everett.

will have opened new markets all over the world, markets which they have been developing while we have been fighting. They resent our command of the seas. Mahan, the American admiral, first enunciated what this means, and it is obvious that the Americans will endeavour to clip our naval wings. Wilson is cool and crafty. We shall have to watch that in our efforts to annihilate the Germans we do not annihilate ourselves. One cannot talk publicly like this, but these are factors to be borne in mind.

L. G. looked thoughtful, but made no reply, beyond saying that he thought Colonel House was a cute old boy.

R.: The crux of the war is shipping tonnage. That will make or break us. And the sooner people understand this the better.

L. G.: I agree, but I believe the submarine will not defeat us. It may cripple us, but it will not defeat us.

L. G. took from his pocket-book two small pieces of paper, one the Agenda in Clemenceau's writing for the Allied Conference—a curious-looking little document—the other an amusing note made by Henry Wilson regarding the discussion at the Conference. L. G. asked Megan which she would have. She chose the Agenda, saying very wisely that it would be an historical document. L. G. said she should have it later, but that as it contained secrets he must retain it for the present.

He has a charming way of relating interesting incidents to his family. Most busy men reserve these narrations for the outside world; they do not trouble to relate them in the family circle. Not so the P.M.. He is always full of anecdotes, and tells a story to his wife or daughter with the same dramatic power and wealth of detail as if he were relating it to the House of Commons. This afternoon he gave a most amusing caricature of Sutherland, one of his secretaries, coming into the room to tell him what was happening in the House of Commons. The imitation was life-like and made us all roar with laughter, in which the P.M. heartily joined.

14TH.—Called upon Sir Eric Geddes at the Admiralty at his request. We talked at length on the submarine question. Sir Eric produced and gave the figures. He said he was con-



vinced that during the next year the menace would be overcome, and that we should make it so hot for the submarines that they would practically be driven out of the sea. I said I hoped he was correct, but could not forget that I had heard the same statement from two of his predecessors speaking in the same room! This remark evidently caused him some perturbation, but I trust he will prove a more reliable prophet. He says the Germans can turn out twelve submarines a month and are now producing ten—that in three and a half months their output has been thirty-nine, of which we have destroyed twenty-seven certain and three doubtful. Also that as a general rule the Germans have twenty-nine submarines in operation. I arranged that Admiral Hall<sup>1</sup> shall each week interview twenty representatives of the British Press to give them information regarding naval operations, etc.. Hall is a sharp little man, with bright, alert eyes, who looks much older than he really is. Very capable, I should think.

22ND.—Lord French telephoned asking me to call. Saw him at the Horse Guards. He said he wished to see the P.M. on an important matter and asked me to arrange an interview. He further told me that he had decided to publish three articles dealing with (1) the landing and retreat, (2) the Battle of the Aisne, and (3) the Battle of the Ancre.

23RD.—Arranged for the P.M. to lunch with me and French on the following day. Dined with the P.M. at Walton Heath. L. G. said that General Charteris has resigned his position with Haig. L. G. thinks that Charteris's views have been wrong and that unduly optimistic opinions and prognostications have been disseminated. Philip Gibbs,<sup>2</sup> whom I saw recently—a nice, unassuming man with a face like a Cardinal's—said the same thing. Gibbs spoke highly of Harington,<sup>3</sup> Chief of Staff to Plumer. L. G. said he had heard that Harington was one of the ablest men in the Army. L. G. thinks the military position is serious and that it has been mismanaged. He says that Haig will not release a single man,

<sup>1</sup> Now Admiral Sir Reginald Hall; Director of Intelligence Division, Admiralty War Staff, 1914-18.

<sup>2</sup> Now Sir Philip Gibbs, the war correspondent and novelist.

<sup>3</sup> Now General Sir Charles Harington.

gun, or aeroplane from the Western Front and has always been against reprisals. Why, L. G. does not know.

24TH.—L. G. and French to lunch at Queen Anne's Gate. The latter said he thought the effects of the forthcoming German air raid campaign had been over-estimated. He did not think the German aviators would be successful in penetrating the barrage and scouts in any great numbers. Very few will have the first-class courage required for the task.

I left L. G. and French to talk in private. When the former had gone French told me that he took a gloomy view of the situation in France and thought it possible that we might have to withdraw altogether, in which case he wanted to know definitely from the P.M. whether he (French) would continue to command in this country. He said that the P.M. had replied, "Of course." French thinks that another twelve months will be a serious thing for us, and that we may emerge from the struggle half-ruined. Both French and L. G. spoke strongly concerning the British offensive in France. The former said yesterday that he had stipulated in fixing the man-power arrangements that our casualties should be reduced next year by one-half. He also said that the War Cabinet had taken evidence from the French generals on the subject of casualties which had been very useful in dealing with the man-power question. Pétain had sent the evidence at L. G.'s request. French told me he felt it necessary to publish the three articles, as Smith-Dorrien<sup>1</sup> had been creating a wrong impression.

25TH.—Christmas Day. Dined midday with L. G. and remained until after 10. Eric Geddes telephoned to say that Jellicoe had resigned. L. G. said, "It is a good thing."

L. G. thinks that much harm is done by publishing harrowing details of air raids, and proposes to issue a regulation prohibiting this.

. . . TH.—Dined with L. G. Talked of the difference between our Government and that of the United States.

L. G.: The President is a Dictator for four years. He can do practically as he pleases. If I were in that position I could accomplish many things which are now impossible or which can only be accomplished by endless manœuvring.

<sup>1</sup> General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien ; d. 1930.

31ST.—Dined with L. G. at Downing Street. He said he would now have to reply to the Germans' peace terms,<sup>1</sup> and that after dinner he would get to work. Britain would in some way have to be compensated for her sacrifices and expenditure.

<sup>1</sup> On December 12th, after the fall of Bucharest, the Germans had proposed an opening of peace negotiations. President Wilson invited them to define their war aims as a preliminary to practical discussions, but their reply was evasive, and the overtures came to nothing.

## Chapter XXXVI

*Talk of peace terms—Lord French on his dismissal—Casualties : a striking comparison—L. G. on the future of Liberalism—Irish Convention difficulties—The military crisis in full blast—Robertson resigns.*

JANUARY 1ST, 1918.—Winston lunched with me. Talked of peace terms. I said, "If the war continues for another twelve months, in attempting to annihilate Germany we may annihilate ourselves. We shall be burdened with another 3,000 millions of debt; we shall have lost or rendered useless another million men; we shall have lost a great part of our mercantile marine and a great part of our trade. The Americans will come in at the end of the war with all the gold in the world and vastly increased merchant shipping. They will have captured much of our trade and will want to dictate terms of peace, including the freedom of the seas."

WINSTON: We must fight on to a finish. You never know when the Germans will crash. It is highly dangerous to dwell on the factors you name.

R.: But suppose it were possible to settle on these terms: the Germans to evacuate France and Belgium; Belgium to be repatriated; the Alsace-Lorraine question to be settled to the satisfaction of the French; Palestine and Mesopotamia to be placed under a protectorate; some suitable arrangement to be made regarding the German colonies, and Serbia and Rumania to be restored. Do *you* think that the Allies would be prepared to continue the war in order to endeavour to smash Germany?

WINSTON: The terms you name are far better than we shall ever get. Of course we should settle on such terms. I would take much less.

R.: Well, you see you are even more pacific than I am.

WINSTON: I may be. I fear that your terms are impossible as things have turned out. I am terribly anxious about the Navy. I know it as no other civilian knows it. Changes are being

made which prevent me from sleeping at night. Oliver<sup>1</sup> and Bacon<sup>2</sup> are going. It is madness. They cannot be replaced—particularly Oliver. The position is most serious. I wish I was in Opposition. When the war is over I shall resign. I could not stop with this Government; I would prefer Opposition. While the war is on I must help to the best of my ability, and I was miserable while I was unemployed.

5th.—Lunched with L. G. at Downing Street. Present, Lord Reading, M. Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Churchill, J. L. Garvin, M. Mantoux. L. G. just back from making great speech on our war aims. He said to Reading and me, "*I went as near peace as I could.* It was the right moment. The time had come to speak definitely." He explained at lunch that his speech was a counter-offensive against the German peace terms with a view to appealing to the German people and detaching the Austrians. L. G. spoke with great and unwonted animation and gestures. I thought his object was to appeal to Garvin, who took the view that L. G.'s terms, if accepted, would leave the Germans stronger than when they entered the war. Garvin enlarged on the accession to German power in the East and prophesied another war in which Germany would dominate the world. Winston expressed the same opinion. I said, "The question is whether (1) we can force better terms if we fight on for one or two years more, (2) whether, if we secure better terms we shall not ruin ourselves in doing so, and (3) whether the rise of Democracy in the Central Powers will not prevent another war." Winston and Garvin did not see their way to Nos. 1 and 2. M. Thomas said that Henderson had told him that L. G. now stood stronger with the Labour Party than he had done for some time. L. G. related with dramatic effect how in the course of his speech to-day he had said, pointing to M. Thomas, "We are with France to the death." M. Thomas very pleased at this. L. G. and Reading both think that M. Tardieu is destined to become Prime Minister of

<sup>1</sup> Now Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry F. Oliver; Chief of Admiralty War Staff, 1914-17; Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, 1917; Commanding 1st Battle Cruiser Squadron, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Sir Reginald Bacon; Commander Dover Patrol, 1915-18; Controller Munitions Inventions, January 1918-April 1919.

France. M. Thomas agreed. They say that M. Tardieu is a most able man.<sup>1</sup>

L. G. stated to us the gist of his speech. I said, "What about Palestine and Mesopotamia? You are not very clear about them." He replied, "Oh, that will have to be worked out hereafter." This I thought significant. Winston and Garvin both looked very gloomy and thoughtful when the terms were being discussed.

6TH.—Dined with L. G., who told me that Clemenceau had telegraphed that he entirely agreed with L. G.'s speech. L. G. regards this as being most important. I described the speech as one of the most epoch-making in the war, and said it had met with almost universal approval, but no doubt the *Morning Post* and those who think with them will criticise it. L. G. said he expected them to do so, but that Clemenceau's letter would place them in a difficulty.

L. G. gave an amusing account of the manner in which a dissenting minister had greeted him when he went to the local chapel. He said, "Your face is familiar, but I forget when we met!" L. G. also described the congregation and their phrenological development, indicating a narrow, stubborn character—awkward people to cross. Kerr remarked, "When you [L. G.] go to heaven, you will find plenty of them there."

We talked of novels.

L. G.: I like a good blood-thirsty novel, with plenty of fighting and plenty of killing. I love Robert Louis Stevenson and Anthony Hope. I don't care for Jane Austen or Anthony Trollope and I don't care for George Eliot. I like Scott, but he is too long in coming to the point. I don't care for serious books nowadays; I have to read too many official documents.

R.: You used to be fond of reading speeches—O'Connell, Grattan, etc.

L. G.: Yes, I liked that. They were very instructive.

11TH.—Lord French to lunch. He asked my opinion as to an article he was anxious to write deprecating the criticism by the Army of the Higher Command, and by the Higher Command of the Cabinet. He said that this is subversive of discipline and

<sup>1</sup> M. Tardieu became Prime Minister in 1929.

most prejudicial to the nation. He also proposed to point out the undesirability of the Cabinet's interfering with the appointments on the staff at G.H.Q. He said that the General should have absolute discretion in the selection of his staff and should be entirely responsible for them. Cabinet interference weakens his authority and responsibility. I told Lord F. that I thought such an article would be most harmful and that it would foster the spirit of distrust and dissatisfaction now existing in the lower ranks. I also pointed out that the article would infringe the salutary rule which he desired to enforce regarding criticism. I advised him to write to the Prime Minister setting forth his views. French replied, "I think you are right. I am sure you are. I shall act on your advice." He is very anxious regarding the military position, and thinks it quite possible that our Army in France may be hard put to it. He believes that the Germans will make another great offensive either in France, Italy, or Salonika, and that if they fail, we may have peace. He gave a graphic account of his dismissal by Asquith. Mr. A. sent for him, and, after referring to the strain to which he (F.) had been subjected and to the state of his health, suggested that he might like to resign. Mr. A. said, "Do not decide now. There is no hurry. Think it over." French returned to the Front. After about ten days he received a letter from Walter Long, with whom he was on very friendly terms, in which Long reminded him of his interview with Asquith and told him plainly that if he did not resign, he would be asked to do so. French, who had not contemplated resignation, thereupon resigned. He said that his health was not good, but that a short holiday would have completely restored it. He spoke very bitterly of Asquith, Haig, and Robertson. He said that Asquith had acted in a cowardly fashion, as he had not told him (French) plainly that he meant him to resign.

Had tea with Edward Carson. He spoke of the P.M.. He said, "He is a wonderful man. How he accomplishes so much and stands so much strain, I do not know. When I look round, I do not see who could replace him. His courage, power of work, power of decision, and urbanity are remarkable. He must possess a marvellous constitution." Carson told me that he has the feeling that peace is in the air. The war is

moving inward; it is not branching out. His experience in litigation leads him to think that the stage has arrived when peace may be possible. All the belligerents are in a bad way. Carson said that he would gladly return to the law; he liked that life best of all. He remarked to Reading to-day, "I long for a whiff of the Law Courts." I said, "You are one of the least ambitious of all the public men I have met." "Yes," said he, "I have no ambitions. What I like best is to read my briefs, conduct my cases, and spend my leisure in my home." He thinks the Americans are preparing very slowly and doubts whether they will be effective from a military point of view until 1919.

13TH.—Dined with L. G. at Walton. He spoke strongly of the incompetence of the Higher Military Command. He said that he had propounded two questions to them: (1) What were the respective forces of the Central Powers and the Allies? and (2) what plan had they got to end the war? To neither were they able to give any satisfactory answer. Nor had they prepared any definite plan for strengthening our forces by the increased use of mechanical appliances. Their only proposal was more men and still more men. He is convinced that the use of man-power could be economised by the increased use of machine-guns, etc.. He had asked Pétain how we could cut down our casualties. Pétain, who is a blunt sort of man, replied, "By getting better generals!" Our casualties are 48 per cent., while those of the French are only 25 per cent.. Auckland Geddes, who had been at Walton Heath to-day, had told him that the Army recruiting arrangements had been very defective.

The conversation turned on the value of good temper as an adjunct to work. I said, "Good temper and sleep are the lubricants of the nervous system. You sleep well and you have a marvellous temper."

L. G.: I lose my temper sometimes, and badly too. The other day when I came to the Cabinet I found the Archbishop of Canterbury there. I was astonished. I inquired how he came to be there uninvited, and was told that he had come as a Trustee of the British Museum on the invitation of Curzon. I was very angry and spoke strongly.



L. G. inquired whether I thought that Northcliffe would carry on the foreign propaganda satisfactorily.<sup>1</sup> I said, "Yes." L. G. thinks that Lowther, the Speaker, would make a first-class Ambassador to Paris, and wonders if he would take the post.

18TH.—Drove with L. G. to Barnes and walked through Richmond Park to Kingston, where we again joined the car and drove to Walton. L. G. said that he had had a very hard week and was longing for a sleep. He said that he had had a great success in the House of Commons in the secret session. I replied that I had heard he had made a wonderful speech. He said, "I really think I did fairly well. They stood up when I left the House. I had one bit of fun. I said, 'The Germans have their troubles as we have ours. Hunger, etc. And they have their Hogges and their Pringles' and, so far as I am concerned, the more they have of them the better I shall be pleased." L. G. said that the King has sent him a charming message on his birthday, in which, amongst other nice things, he said, "You have my full confidence."

20TH.—Dined with L. G.. He said that, from all accounts, Trotsky is a powerful man. The Russians are engaged in an interesting experiment: they are beginning with a clean sheet. What they will do with it remains to be seen. They want a great general. He might alter the history of the world. L. G. had Buchanan,<sup>2</sup> our Petrograd Ambassador, to breakfast. He was favourably impressed with him. L. G. agreed with me that the *Daily News* Russian correspondent is the best. He thinks that he is inspired by Trotsky, whose views he represents. I referred to the rumours that he (L. G.) and Asquith might come to an arrangement. They lunched together the week before last to discuss L. G.'s peace terms speech. L. G. replied that there had been no proposal of that sort. He doubts if Asquith would serve under him.

<sup>1</sup> He had just been appointed Director of Propaganda in enemy countries.

<sup>2</sup> The late J. M. Hogge (d. 1928) and the late W. M. R. Pringle (d. 1928), two independent Scottish Liberal M.P.s, who were among the most persistent critics of Mr. Lloyd George's Government.

<sup>3</sup> The late Sir George Buchanan; Ambassador to Petrograd, 1910-18; d. 1924.

27TH.—Dined with L. G., who describes Hertling's<sup>1</sup> speech on the peace terms as "defiant in tone but pacific in intention." L. G. thinks the speech clever. I said, "It all boils down to Alsace-Lorraine and the German colonies, with questions relating to the freedom of the seas looming in the distance." L. G. agreed. He said that he always liked reading Bethmann-Hollweg's speeches. He thought them very able—firm and clear. In short, regular hammer-blows. Smuts was with L. G. to-day. Just back from France, where he saw Haig, who, he thinks, looks tired and worn. I told L. G. that yesterday I had called upon Robertson Nicoll, who was now more friendly to him. Nicoll had remarked upon the desirability of reuniting L. G. to his old associates, the Dissenters, and that he thought this would be easy if L. G. would drop State Purchase. L. G. avowed that he was now paying no attention to this, as he had other things to see to—the conduct of the war, etc.. He did not, however, say in terms that he had abandoned the scheme.

We discussed the political situation. L. G. thinks that the Liberal Party in its old form is a thing of the past and cannot be galvanised into life. He doubts the success of the great efforts now being made by the Liberal organisation, who are very busy indeed in all directions. He thinks that it may come to a fight between him and Henderson, and that all Parties, including Labour, will be split and be reconstituted. I said, "But you must have candidates. You cannot vote without having someone to vote for." L. G. agreed, and said that he had some men coming to see him about the matter to-morrow morning, with the object of forming an organisation. He said that he proposes to appoint Beaverbrook to succeed Carson as head of the Department of Information. He asked my opinion. I replied that I thought he would do the work well.

We talked at length on the comparative merits of advocates, agreeing that on the whole Charles Russell<sup>2</sup> and Carson were the best advocates of modern times. We also discussed

<sup>1</sup> Count von Hertling, German Chancellor from 1917 to the end of 1918; d. 1919.

<sup>2</sup> The late Lord Russell of Killowen, L.C.J.

several celebrated law cases, including the Tichborne case. L. G. said that no litigation had ever excited so much attention, and that a strong Tichborne political party might readily have been formed. He said that his old uncle used to read the case to him when he was a boy and was greatly interested. L. G. thinks highly of Sir Edward Clarke's reminiscences, now being published in an evening paper. He says that Clarke has great dramatic power, and that when published as a book the reminiscences will form a valuable record of legal and political life in the latter part of the nineteenth century. He asked me why Clarke had not been a complete success. I replied, "He was too rigid and had the knack of creating dour and unrelenting opposition. Clarke has a strong Puritan strain which has not fitted in with his legal and political career."

To-morrow L. G. goes to France to attend the Allied Conference. He hates the journey, and laughingly remarked that he must arrange to have the next war here, so that the Allies will have to come to London. I said, "Would there be any Allies?"

L. G.: I wonder if there would!

28TH.—Called upon Beaverbrook at the Hyde Park Hotel. He told me that ten days ago L. G. offered him the Duchy of Lancaster with financial control of the Ministry of Munitions. Beaverbrook discussed the proposal with Winston, and subsequently told L. G. that Winston's views and his were so much at variance that he (Beaverbrook) had decided to decline the position. Winston had long been a friend of his and he did not wish to break with him, as he would be sure to do under such an arrangement.

Much talk about the Information Department, of which B. is to take charge.

FEBRUARY 9TH, 1918.—Charles Russell asked me to invite certain of the Irish Convention delegates to dinner. Called with him to see Horace Plunkett<sup>1</sup> at Downing Street, where he has office accommodation while the delegates are in London. Plunkett is a curious Irish type—very intense and determined—a mixture of Parnell, commercialism, and idealism.

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. Sir Horace Plunkett, Chairman Irish Convention, 1917-18; d. 1932.

He is very diffuse, and for that reason does not appeal to the P.M., who says that he can never understand what he is driving at. The sort of man who speaks in parentheses. He, however, spoke very clearly to me—perhaps because the time was short. He said he wanted me to tell the P.M. that an early settlement of the Irish question is absolutely essential. Ireland is prosperous and has the superficial appearance of being quiet and contented. Unfortunately there is a seething mass of rebellion which may break out at any moment. Russell (A. E.), who has just returned from the Convention, has prepared a most damning report of its proceedings, which shows that the Convention started manacled from the first by undertakings given by the Government to the Ulstermen, who have proved to be intractable and unyielding. Plunkett fears that Russell's report will do serious injury in Canada and Australia. Therefore, from every point of view, domestic and foreign, an immediate settlement is essential. The question is, by whom is the matter to be settled? Is it to be settled by the Convention or the Government? Plunkett thinks there are strong reasons why the former should settle it. Some coercion will be necessary whatever is done. If the settlement is backed by a substantial body of the Irish nation, it will be much easier to carry it into effect. The men who have formed the scheme will be responsible for executing it. On the other hand, if the Government undertake the task, they will have no one behind them and will have to bear the whole odium for whatever coercion is required. He thinks that the Convention started in the wrong atmosphere. The Government thought they should deal gently with the Irish while the Convention was sitting. That was a mistake. Ireland requires firm and just government at all times. I said, "Is not fiscal autonomy the chief difficulty? Murphy<sup>1</sup> insists upon it. What do you say to that?" Plunkett agreed, and said that even the cottagers in Ireland, who did not understand the meaning of the phrase, were all talking about "fiscal autonomy"—which he pronounced with a marked Irish accent. The fiscal question has caused a renewed split between the Southern Unionists and the Nationalists, who were approximating a settlement. It was arranged that I should invite

<sup>1</sup> An important Irish man of business.

a certain number of the delegates to dinner, the invitations being issued through Plunkett.

13TH.—We had the dinner in an emasculated form. Plunkett, the Archbishop of Dublin, Murphy, Vesey Knox, Charles Russell, and Captain Shaw came. We had much talk, but nothing happened. Whenever the discussion reached what seemed to be a definite point, my guests sheered off. Whether this indicated that they were not anxious to settle, or whether it was due to the Irish temperament, I do not know. But I am bound to say that Plunkett, by whom the dinner was arranged, was as bad as any of them, instead of being clear and direct, as he had been with me on Saturday.

16TH.—This has been an exciting week—the military crisis in full blast. Long Cabinet discussions and rumours of resignations. Maurice Hankey rang me up this afternoon and asked me to take him to Walton Heath. Later in the afternoon he arrived with the news of Robertson's resignation. He is to be succeeded by Wilson. Hankey says it was bound to come. Apart from other differences, L. G. and Robertson are temperamentally in opposition. Robertson was very moved. A statement is to be issued this evening. I am told that the Versailles Conference agreed that the Allied resources should be pooled and placed under the command of a group of generals presided over by Foch. The pool is to be available to repel the German advance at any point which may require special reinforcements. The group of generals are, however, to be controlled by the Versailles military council, on which Wilson was our representative. It is said that this plan was agreed to by Robertson. It involved a modification of the Order in Council which prescribes his powers. When the Cabinet came to put the plan into execution, it is said that Robertson objected. [Hankey was right. Temperamentally Wilson was much better fitted than Robertson to get on with L. G.. W. had the happy knack, which suited L. G., of interspersing serious business with jokes and badinage. For instance, when a very complicated marine chart was being examined by L. G., Wilson, and Admiral Wemyss, the Admiral remarked, "We have got it upside down." "That's how the Prime Minister likes it," interjected Wilson, much to L. G.'s amusement.]

17TH.—Dined with L. G.. Found him reading official papers.

L. G.: I am tired out. Last week I really was very bad. I had a new doctor recommended by Armstrong Jones to replace poor old Macnaghten. He examined me thoroughly. He said, "You are sound and strong. Your heart and lungs are good, but you have been doing too much. You must take ten days' holiday." I said, "I can't do that, but I will take the week-end." That was on Friday. Even while the examination was taking place, Hankey came to obtain instructions on a pressing matter. I said to the doctor, "There! You see what I have to put up with!" As it was, on Friday night the crisis developed, so that I had to go to London on Saturday morning and stay there all day. I had one of the most anxious days I have ever had. I was with the King for an hour.

R.: Why did you not come to an earlier decision? The public are prepared to accept the Government's decision on all questions relative to the conduct of the war, but when they hear of intrigues and are mystified by lack of frankness on the part of Ministers, they form the conclusion that the Government do not know their own mind or are endeavouring for some inadequate or improper reason to make a change by secret or unworthy methods which they dare not make openly in the legitimate way. Your troubles are due to secrecy, indecision, and the Northcliffe attacks on Haig and Robertson.

L. G.: Yes, I know. I could not sleep for two nights after the appearance of the articles in the *Daily Mail*, which tied my hands and did endless mischief. Then again, one has to carry one's colleagues along with one; one cannot shed them on the road for lack of patience and persuasion. Derby has been the chief difficulty; he has been resigning twice a day. Robertson has acted unwisely. At the Versailles Conference the soldiers had their say. Some of them made long speeches. Robertson agreed to the resolutions.

R.: Which, I understand, involved some curtailment of his powers under the Order in Council.

L. G.: Yes. He raised no objection until we came to carry out the arrangements. Then he objected. We offered him Versailles if he thought that the more important post, but he would

not take it, and would not accept his old position with modified powers. Now he says that he has not resigned. He is being backed by Asquith. We shall give him another post, but Haig, who has been here to-day, refuses to give him command of an army. Haig has acted well. He will not resign. He says that he is out to beat the Germans. We have to face a very serious crisis, and the Government may fall. This is the first real test we have had; and although I know that the country is with me, I am not sure what line the House of Commons will take.

R.: The incident will bring about a coalition with strange bedfellows—the Asquith group and the section of the Tories whose motto is “The Army, right or wrong”!

L. G.: Yes, we must be prepared for that. I said to Kerr yesterday, “Have you packed up? We may be out next week.” He replied, “No, I have not yet begun to pack!”

R.: You are stronger than perhaps you think, but you weaken yourself continually by taking steps to conciliate interests which are not as powerful as they think or as you believe them to be. The remedy is often worse than the threatened disease.

L. G.: The position is a difficult one, but in this particular matter I have made up my mind to take the fence. Having done so, I feel happier and stronger. Wilson is an able man. Robertson is what you call a safe man.

We then sang Welsh hymns to the accompaniment of the guns in the distance repelling an air raid. Commenting on one of the hymns, L. G. remarked: “When I was an articled clerk I was asked on one occasion to stay over Sunday at Portmadoc in order to start the hymns at the chapel, the man who usually did so being away, and of course there was no organ. You will have noticed that this hymn starts on a low note, but rises to a high one. I began too high, so that the congregation was soon brought to a full stop, and we had to begin all over again. I often laugh at that incident.”

18TH.—L. G., Kerr, and Miss Lindsay Williams, the artist, to lunch with me at Walton Heath.

L. G. far from well and very preoccupied with his speech for to-morrow. I diverted the conversation from political and

public topics. We talked of the importance of good eyesight for artists.

MISS WILLIAMS: Some artists, however, see too much. They lose the general impression by seeing too much detail.

R.: So do some politicians and social reformers!

L. G. (laughing): That's right! You must look at the mountains and general configuration of the landscape. You must not pay too much attention to the worm casts!

R.: On the other hand, the worm casts may destroy the fertility of the land unless they are carefully watched.

L. G. (laughing again): That also is quite true.

The conversation turned on the proper mode of resting.

L. G.: Every muscle should be relaxed. Look at that dog. See how he lies. There is much to be said for the easy chair; the old-fashioned, straight-backed chair did not rest the body.

R.: Sir Arbuthnot Lane, the great surgeon, says you should sleep on your stomach.

L. G.: The doctors are always changing their opinions. They always have some new fad. I shall not act on Sir Arbuthnot's opinion.

We had some further talk and then L. G. departed, saying, "Well, I must go and face the lions. I must get my speech ready for to-morrow. I wish I could have a few more days in which to rest, but it cannot be. I must be in the House of Commons to-morrow."

19TH.—L. G. came to lunch. He said Robertson had accepted the Eastern Command, also that Lord Robert Cecil is resigning. He came into the Government only with reluctance and has never been happy. Balfour, Bonar Law, Milner, and Curzon are all with L. G., who says that Milner is a man of first-class courage. Smuts and L. G. agreed some time ago that Robertson was not the man for the job. Yesterday L. G. told me that Robertson had written a friendly letter, saying that he (L. G.) had treated him well.

20TH.—Brade tells me that Robertson thought Mr. A. would pull him through. L. G.'s speech yesterday settled the crisis, and Mr. A. was powerless to help Robertson.

21ST.—Long chat with Lord Derby regarding venereal disease in the Army. Think I shall succeed in getting prophyl-



lactic treatment adopted. He has seen the Archbishop, the Bishop of Winchester, and Dr. Meyer. Meyer sees no objection, but the Bishops strongly object on the ground that fear of consequences is in their opinion the chief deterrent. A curious commentary on the effect of their own discourses ! I arranged for Lord Derby to meet the Medical Committee, of which I am chairman. I suggested that disinfection after the act might be regarded with less aversion by the Bishops and others. Lord Derby at once seized the idea and said he thought he could carry this. We shall see. Few reforms are more essential. As it is, hundreds of thousands of both sexes are needlessly contracting loathsome diseases.

We talked of the political crisis. Derby is evidently very tired and worried. He said, " I think the P.M. wants me to go." I said, " You are mistaken. He does not want you to resign."

DERBY: I should hate to be thought lacking in honesty.

R.: You would not do your country a service by resigning at such a time. In my opinion Robertson acted unwisely. He took up his stand on a question of organisation. The Allies had determined upon a plan, and he had no option but to concur. He could have fought later on with much better prospects of success had some important military operation been proposed to which he and Haig objected.

DERBY: Yes, that is the point. The Allies approved the plan. Robertson thought it unworkable and dangerous, but I agree it was not open to him to oppose what had been agreed upon. He was bound either to accept the scheme or to go. There was no alternative.

24TH.—L. G. made his speech on Monday and wiped the floor with the Opposition. When I arrived this evening, I found him looking very tired. He said, " I feel miserable, and as if I had been beaten all over. I have had a hard week. The Asquithians are mad. Mr. A. spoke badly. I could see that he knew the game was up. He has been largely responsible for Robertson's conduct. Robertson was led to believe that Mr. A. would pull him through. His acceptance of the Eastern Command really settled the matter."

## Chapter XXXVII

*L. G. wants a freer hand—Some hints on speech-making—Black Saturday—Foch takes command—President Wilson promises the men—Irish trouble develops—L. G. and the Maurice debate.*

MARCH 2ND, 1918.—L. G. lunched with me, and we drove to Ockley to tea. Balfour and Bonar Law are anxious for a combination with L. G., but Salisbury and the other Cecils do not want to lose control of the Conservative Party. L. G. is not sure what line Walter Long intends to take up. He (L. G.) asked me what I thought about an election. I replied that I believed he had the country behind him, but that an election would be unpopular. I added that he would have to ally himself with some Party or be prepared to run his own candidates. Just now a National Party with national aims would be the most popular. The old-fashioned badges have ceased to have any meaning.

L. G.: Yes, I agree that would be a good title—"The National Party," to enforce a national policy. (We overlooked that the title has already been appropriated by Page-Croft<sup>1</sup> and Co.) My position at the present time is very difficult. I am not sure of the House of Commons. It is no use being Prime Minister unless you can do what you want to do. It is useless for me to say that I can, because I can't. I have to make compromises all the time in order to conciliate different sections. It is trying to carry on a great war on such conditions. Take the Irish question. If I had a clear majority in the House of Commons I could soon settle it, but I have not. I have been asked to speak at the meeting of the Free Churches. I am inclined to do so. What is your view?

R.: I am strongly in favour of it. The Dissenters are your oldest supporters.

L. G.: Will you ask Nicoll what he thinks?

<sup>1</sup> Brigadier-General Sir Henry Page-Croft.

R.: You had better see him. I will arrange a meeting.

(I arranged for L. G. to invite Nicoll to lunch on March 12th.)

L. G.: Reverting to the political situation, my domestic policy has not changed. I am out to give the under-dog a chance—the man who has no exceptional qualities on which to rely for success. The talented man will always look after himself, but the State must see that the under-dog gets his share of the sunshine of life. Bonar Law thinks very much as I do. He is loyal and able—far abler than people give him credit for. A man to be a big man must have a big heart. Joseph Reinach, Gambetta's secretary, told me that Gambetta was a bigger man than any of the French politicians of to-day. Clemenceau is a great man, but he is nothing more than an intellectual machine with great courage. He has no heart. The more I see of the war, the more I feel that no great general has appeared on the side of the Allies—no one who displays any real sign of genius.

15TH.—L. G. drove to Wimbledon to dine with Faulkner, one of the Directors of the British Tobacco Company. On the way down he spoke of Clemenceau, who is here attending an Allied War Council. L. G. says he is very attractive, but a hard, cynical old boy. Clemenceau said that Gladstone reminded him of a priest, and that Mr. G. had a most complicated character. He regarded him (Mr. G.) as an idealist and talker, not as a real man of action. Clemenceau does not smoke. Twenty years ago he smoked an enormous number of cigars, but after fourteen days' struggle gave up the habit. During the critical fortnight he worked all day with an open box of cigars on the table before him in order to try himself as much as possible.

16TH.—Golfed with L. G., and he lunched with me. An interesting talk on the preparation of speeches.

L. G.: In preparing a speech, the first point to consider is what purpose you wish to effect; the second, how best to achieve it. Many speakers subordinate their purpose to their oratory. Many hang a speech on a phrase or phrases. The rhetoric should be subordinate to the purpose in view.

R.: The phrases should spring out of the speech, not the speech out of the phrases.

L. G.: Quite true. A halting speech may often be the best to secure the aim in view.

R.: The juryman said of Scarlett, the barrister, "He is not much of an advocate. He always has the easy cases." Scarlett never appeared to be making an effort.

L. G.: Sometimes argument is the best weapon, sometimes an appeal to prejudice, sometimes you have to allay prejudice, and sometimes you have to stir men to action. When Cicero was prosecuting or defending a man, he did not think about making an eloquent speech which would go down to history as a great oratorical effort. His object was to run his man in or to get him off as the case might be. This rule applies in all public speaking, and for the matter of that in all private conversation.

L. G. told me that he had been reading Cromwell's speeches. "He had just the same difficulties to contend with as I have," said L. G. "There are always cranks, and there are always people who say you are doing the wrong thing and should have done something else."

17TH.—Dinner with L. G. as usual. Lord Pirrie to see him about shipping. L. G. spoke in high terms of Lord P.'s energy and ability.

L. G. says things in the Irish Convention are looking a little brighter. He says also that the Bishop of Raphoe has been co-operating with the Orangemen—a strange combination. L. G. places John Redmond very high as an orator. He thinks he was really the last exponent of the old style—dignified, eloquent, and rhetorical.

We spoke again of Gambetta, when L. G. repeated his aphorism, "To carry a great purpose you must have a great heart." Gambetta had a great heart; he was not a mere intellectual machine.

23RD (BLACK SATURDAY).—Drove to Walton in L. G.'s car. Found him waiting for me. He said, "I must go back to London at once. The news is very bad. I fear it means disaster. Come with me!"

On the way back L. G. told me that the Germans had

broken through our line and that the Third and Fifth Armies had been defeated.<sup>1</sup> He further said that the arrangement for pooling the British and French reserves had not been carried out—that Haig and Pétain had stuck their heels into the ground and had declined in effect to carry out the scheme. Foch had been here this week. The War Council had asked him about the reserves and found that he had no information. L. G. believes that Haig had made no preparation for the attack, notwithstanding that he was warned that it would probably take place exactly as it did. Wilson foresaw it. Wilson set up a war game in which one section represented the enemy and the other our staff. The enemy section planned this movement. Haig would pay no heed to it. In fact, when a young officer who had taken part in the game was explaining the enemy plans, Haig read an official paper all the time he was speaking.

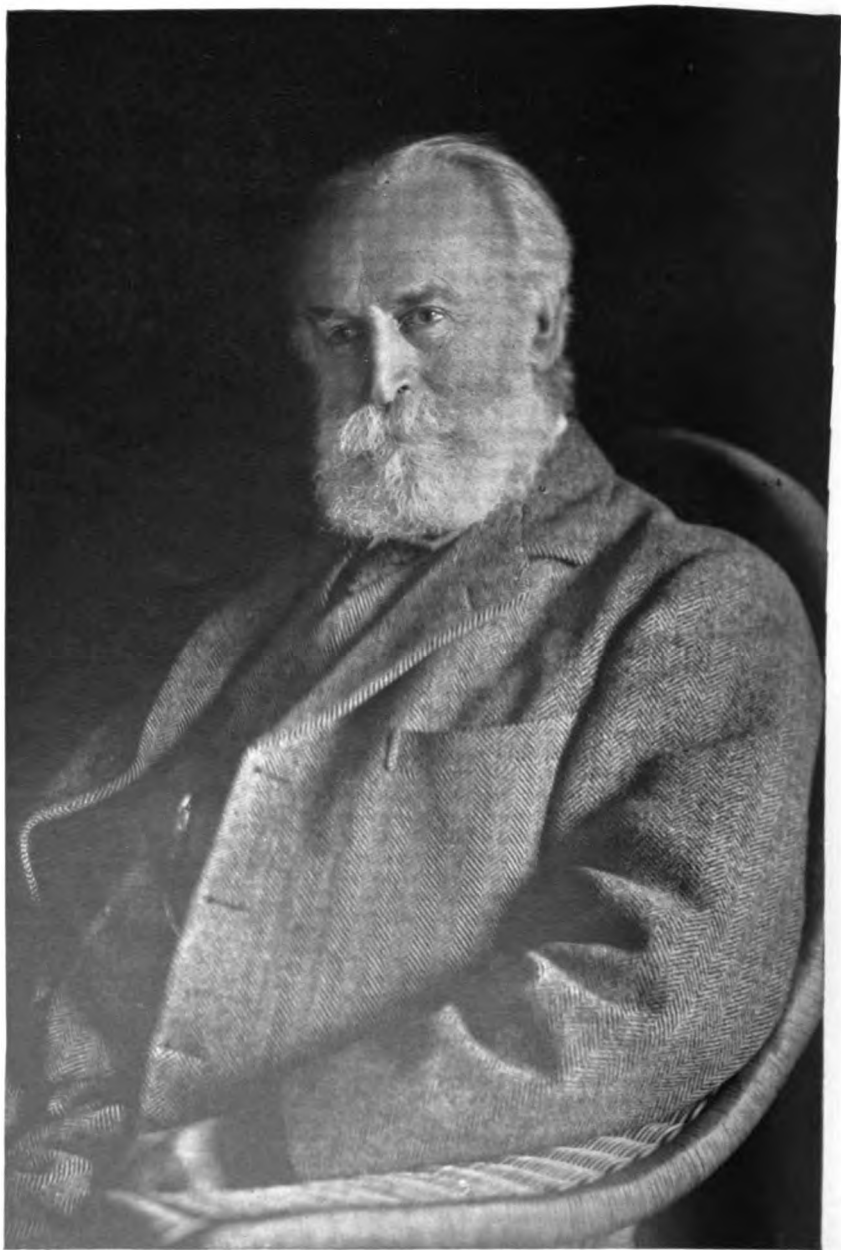
24TH (BLACK SUNDAY).—L. G. went from Walton to London in the afternoon. I dined at his house and awaited his return. He arrived at 10.30 looking very tired. He said again, "Things look very bad. I fear it means disaster. They have broken through, and the question is what there is behind to stop them. The absence of the reserves is the most serious factor. The French are now bringing up their reserves, but it may be too late. I foresaw this when I made my Paris speech. That was why we formed the Versailles plan, but it has not been acted upon. I may go to France on Tuesday. Meanwhile I must send all the men I can. Unless President Wilson hurries up, he may be too late. He has wasted too much time; he has been nine months in the war and has done very little which is of real service at the front."

He told me that one of the disasters of the war was the failure to appoint Henry Wilson to high command. "They have wrongly regarded him," said L. G., "as a farceur, just because he will joke on all occasions. But what does that matter?"

(Notwithstanding the news, the P.M. was firm and cheer-

<sup>1</sup> The Second Battle of the Somme began on March 21st. In this and subsequent actions Britain lost in round figures 400,000 killed and missing, 80,000 prisoners, and 800 guns in less than six weeks.





THE LATE MR. C. P. SCOTT.

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ful. Although very anxious and much worried, he did not fail to have a good laugh as usual. His courage is remarkable. His work and anxieties are always with him, but he mingles them with bright and amusing conversation which lightens the burden.)

30TH (EASTER SATURDAY).—L. G. and Philip Kerr to lunch. L. G. says that the news is better, but that he has had an awful week—the most anxious he has ever had. He went to church on Good Friday.

I congratulated him on the appointment of Foch as Commander-in-Chief of the French and British Armies.<sup>1</sup> He said, "If I had had my way in appointing a Commander-in-Chief months ago, I think that to-day things would have been very different."

The conversation turned on religion.

R.: Many great military commanders have been famed for their piety. It is a very appropriate military accoutrement. If you are always risking sudden death, you want to dig yourself in.

L. G.: That is a very practical, business-like view!

R.: Most of the Indian Mutiny generals were very religious—Havelock, Nicholson, etc. Stonewall Jackson is another instance. Lord Roberts was inclined that way, but it must be admitted that there are many illustrious instances to the contrary.

L. G.: Don't forget Oliver Cromwell.

R.: Religious politicians are more difficult to find. Mr. Gladstone is the only one I can remember.

KERR: Abraham Lincoln.

L. G.: He was not devout.

KERR: He had the religious sense strongly developed.

L. G.: Well, I claim to have that, but I do not claim to be religious in the sense we have been discussing.

L. G. went early to prepare with Kerr a message to the nation.

*Later.*—Kerr returned with the draft message and wanted

<sup>1</sup> On March 29th, Foch (d. 1929) was appointed to co-ordinate the work of the British and French Armies. He was given command of all the armies fighting in France on April 14th.



to know what I thought of it. I said it was first-rate, but suggested that it should be made a little less optimistic. Kerr agreed, and the draft was toned down slightly after consultation with L. G.

*Later.*—L. G. walked out to me on the links. He said that a big battle was proceeding, that he felt anxious and restless and could not sleep as he had intended. Randall, the detective, arrived shortly afterwards with a reassuring message from Foch which made L. G. happier.

These interruptions led to an amusing incident. I was playing in a three-ball match. When Randall appeared, one of my opponents exclaimed in an angry voice, "Look here, old chap! Are we playing golf, or are we not?"

31ST (EASTER SUNDAY).—Dined with L. G.. Almost as soon as I arrived the telephone bell rang and a message came through from Lord Reading stating that for the next three months President Wilson would send 120,000 men per month if we would provide the shipping. L. G. was very excited and said this was the biggest thing he had accomplished during the last week. He insisted on the secretaries taking down the message word by word. He then said, "At last I have stirred Wilson into action. I sent a message for Reading to read at a dinner at which he was the guest. That had the effect. These 480,000 will be invaluable. We must publish the joyful news."

KERR: You must be careful not to be too joyful. You have not yet got the men.

R.: Kerr is right. Don't paint the picture in too glowing colours.

L. G.: The news will hearten up the French.

(The statement assumed a moderate form calculated to meet all requirements.)

R.: How about the shipping?

L. G.: That will be all right. I have been into that. We shall have to stop the importation of food-stuffs for a time in order to turn all the ships on to carrying troops. Now we must have a meeting with Baker, the U.S. Secretary for War. Either I and our shipping people must go to France, or Baker must come here.

R.: Why not hold the conference here instead of taking the shipping people away from their work? And why not save yourself a troublesome journey?

L. G.: There is something to be said for that point of view. Now let us tell General Wilson. He will be very pleased. He calls President Wilson his "cousin." (On the telephone) "Well, General, I have some good news for you. Your cousin has agreed to send 120,000 men per month for the next three months. He is against conscription in Ireland." (Reading had said in his telegram that Wilson and the Americans are opposed to Irish conscription.) Now we must tell Hankey. He will be very anxious to learn the result of our labours. (On the telephone) "I have a piece of good news for you. Wilson has agreed to send 120,000 men per month for three months. Now you can sleep to-night."

During the evening L. G. again referred to our lack of generalship. He said that our armies were splendid, but that the generals were second-rate men, charged with the performance of a first-rate task. He spoke highly of Plumer,<sup>1</sup> and Harington, his chief of staff. He also spoke well of Byng<sup>2</sup> and Horne.<sup>3</sup>

APRIL 1918.—Called upon Lord French at the Horse Guards. He says that the position is very serious—that we may have another Sedan in which we should probably be able to save only some 500,000 men, and that he is making all necessary preparations to repel an invasion. In his opinion there will be no invasion unless we are defeated in France. He considers the position is due to mismanagement. The Army is worn out by the operations of 1917. It has lost heart and has fought badly in consequence. Being a young army, it should have been nursed. French thinks that Plumer should at once be made Commander-in-Chief. That would hearten the Army. French has told L. G. so. Plumer is in command in the critical area already. "That is the best comfort I can give you," said French. We talked of the Volunteers. He is in favour of dis-

<sup>1</sup> Later Viscount Plumer, commanded Second Army B.E.F., March–December 1918; d. 1932.

<sup>2</sup> Later Viscount Byng, commanded Third Army, 1917–19.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Horne, commanded First Army, September 1916–19; d. 1929.

banding them and forming a compulsory militia for all up to sixty.

SUNDAY, APRIL 1918.—L. G. and Kerr called for me and we went for a walk. L. G. says that the news is better. We are holding our own and giving the French time to come to our help, but the position is very critical. The American generals are acting badly. Pershing wants to keep back his men for an American Army instead of incorporating them with the British troops. L. G. thinks Haig's proclamation a mistake ; it looks as if he were rattled. Returned with L. G. to his house and dined with him.

L. G. said that General Sackville-West,<sup>1</sup> the new member of the Versailles Council, had told him that his father, who had opposed L. G. as a candidate for the Carnarvon Boroughs, had thirty years ago predicted that L. G. would become Prime Minister. "That was strange," said L. G., "because I used to say some wild things in those days. I was very wild."

KERR: What were you then?

L. G.: I should describe myself, incongruous as it may appear, as a Nationalist-Socialist. I was and am a strong believer in nationality, and I believe in the intervention of the State to secure that everyone has a fair chance and that there is no unnecessary want and poverty. Of course there are wasters who must suffer the penalty of their own misconduct ; but every member of the community who behaves properly and does his best should be secured a fair chance. That has always been my creed. I don't know that I have altered much. I have grown more tolerant ; I have come to see that usually there is something to be said for the other side. For instance, I have grown to recognise that Dissenters are not always in the right and Anglicans always in the wrong, and that all landlords are not scoundrels of the deepest dye.

R.: But you started with a sympathetic policy for the under-dog, and that is still your policy. You may have changed your opinions regarding methods, but the object is still the same.

L. G.: Yes, that is quite true. I have not changed. My policy is still the same.

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Sackville ; British Military Representative Allied Military Committee of Versailles, April 1918.

WEDNESDAY OR THURSDAY, APRIL 1918.—Called at Downing Street. L. G. says we have done well at Givenchy to-day and that he is feeling somewhat less anxious. He spoke of our arrangements at the Front. He says that our Army was tired out with the operations of 1917—that Haig only began to dig in in November 1917, and that he commenced this battle with tired troops.

21ST (SUNDAY).—Dined with L. G. at Walton. He says he thinks we are in for a big fight with the Irish, but that we must go through with it. The Sinn Feiners are in league with the Germans. Two men were discovered in a boat which had evidently been in communication with a submarine, and an Irish soldier who had been a prisoner in Germany was also discovered in a collapsible boat which had apparently been carried by a submarine. Lord French has written from Ireland to say things are very serious, but that he has made arrangements to quell a rebellion. The rebels are thought to have a considerable quantity of arms, but French believes that they will be unable to withstand machine-gun fire. L. G. says that if Home Rule is granted and the Irish are not prepared to play their part in the defence of the Empire, we must show them that we mean to govern. We must relieve their grievance, and then they must come into line with the rest of the Empire. They cannot claim to act as a separate nation. He believes that he will have the country behind him, and that for us this issue is very much the same as that which Lincoln had to face. Unity or segregation.

L. G. says that the Americans are very slow, and that we urgently need their help. Wilson does not seem to realise the urgency, and he is so inaccessible that Reading cannot get an opportunity to explain the situation as it should be explained. It is three weeks ago that the 120,000 men were promised, but so far as L. G. can discover very few are on the road. While we were talking a long telegram from Reading was communicated over the telephone, in which it was stated generally that the 120,000 men would be provided, but that their disposition must be left to General Pershing, as America would not place the men at the unconditional disposition of General Foch. L. G. evidently thought this unsatisfactory. L. G. thinks that

much depends on the realisation by the Americans of the need for immediate help. I told him that I had explained this in a short informal speech to the American Labour Mission, who had shown from their speeches that they did not understand the position, and that thereupon they had expressed a desire to cable to Wilson and Gompers, the American Labour Leader, urging that the former should at once send more men to be incorporated without delay in the British and French Armies. L. G. replied that he heartily approved.

L. G. said that Milner and C. P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian* had visited him during the afternoon, and that he had been engaged in dictating a long letter which had given him much anxious thought, as it involved a quantity of figures. Always the same round of work. We, however, had some fun in telling humorous stories. I told one of a workman who had been badly injured in an accident in respect of which a lawyer had recovered £100 compensation for him under the Workmen's Compensation Act. Still swathed in bandages, the man called at the lawyer's office to settle up. The lawyer handed him a cheque for £50. The man said nothing, but looked hard at the cheque. "Is there anything wrong with it?" asked the lawyer. "No," replied the man; "but I was wondering whether it was you or me as fell off that — scaffold!"

L. G. responded with the story of the old farmer, a friend of his uncle's, who had sent some wheat to the miller, who, in accordance with the custom of the country, repaid himself for his labour by taking a toll of the corn. When the farmer's share arrived it looked so small that he said to the miller's man, "Take that back and tell your master he has made a mistake. He has sent me the toll and kept my share."

SATURDAY, APRIL 1918.—Drove with L. G. to Walton. He said that he had to make one of the most difficult speeches he had ever had to make. He had to describe the recent military operations which had been so disastrous, but he could not tell the whole story, as the result would be to depress our troops and give information to the enemy. He could not say, for example, that the decision of the Versailles Conference as to the formation of an army of manœuvres had not been carried out. He said, referring to the conference he had attended at

G.H.Q. this week, "I left London at 9 p.m.. I slept the night at Folkestone. I crossed at 7 a.m., and was back in London at 4 a.m. next morning. I made a strong speech. I was almost brutal in what I said about the conduct of affairs."

SUNDAY, APRIL 1918.—Dined with L. G.. Found him very busy dictating his speech, but the proceedings were somewhat interrupted by the bleeding of the nose of the lady shorthand-writer. However, after dinner the speech was completed. L. G. said that he had been dictating for two hours. He said that he thought the speech was not bad. Kerr was charged with the duty of reading it over. L. G.'s powers of work are remarkable. He did not seem to be at all weary after a most strenuous week, and remarked that he had often felt much more tired. His messenger who valets him when he goes abroad told me that when the party reached Downing Street at 4 a.m. on the return journey from G.H.Q., L. G. was the freshest of the lot. He expects a row with the Irish. They are out to oppose conscription for Ireland by every means in their power and would rather not have Home Rule than Home Rule coupled with conscription.

MAY 4TH, 1918.—Drove down with L. G.. Called for him at Buckingham Palace, where he had gone to see the King. He asked me what I thought of a statement he had prepared for publication regarding his visit to France. I told him I considered it very good. He then gave his secretary instructions to issue it to the Press so that it would appear in the early editions of the Sunday papers. He said that he had a great reception by the soldiers, which fact would surprise some of the people at the War Office. He told me that Clemenceau is a wonderful old man, but wants humouring, which is not surprising considering his age and remarkable position. He is full of humour. L. G. thinks Foch undoubtedly the biggest general he has yet met. He is a great man, and Haig is now glad to have him behind him. When L. G. and others were discussing the possibility of the Germans reaching the Channel ports, Foch remarked with great emphasis, "Jamais, jamais, jamais!" Foch has no staff, and gives all his orders through Captain Weygand, a Belgian officer who is devoted to him. W. is a very able man.

5TH.—Dined with L. G. as usual. Found him sleeping on the veranda. He says that he has a hard week before him, as he will have to try to pull the Irish question together—a curious but descriptive phrase.

11TH.—Drove down with L. G., Mrs. L. G., Philip Kerr, and F. Guest, the Whip.

R.: Well, you smashed them this week. You had a fine case and made a wonderful speech. (The Maurice debate.<sup>1</sup>)

L. G.: Yes, I think we did pretty well. Mr. A. looked very sick. He crouched low down on the bench and kept moistening his lips, a habit of his when excited. He made a great mistake. As he meant to go to a division, he should have continued the debate. As it was, he divided without making any reply.

R.: And ended up by going into the Lobby with all the pacifists and cranks. Hugh Cecil made the only debating speech after you sat down. Were you very tired?

L. G.: I was not very tired when I sat down, but three hours later I was absolutely done and things looked as black as they could. However, I felt better in the morning. By the way, do you know who Billy Sunday is?

R.: Yes, of course; everybody knows about him. He is a religious showman.

L. G.: Would you believe it? Neither Chamberlain nor Curzon had heard of him. He sent me a telegram of congratulation on my speech, which I mentioned at the Cabinet. I then said, "Do you know Gipsy Smith?" They did not, so I told them who he was, and inquired whether they knew Jimmy Wilde. "No," said Curzon. "Is he another of those preaching fellows?" (L. G.'s imitation of Curzon most amusing.)

L. G. gave an amusing account of his small nephew's reception of Olwen's baby. His nephew is a quaint character about five years old, and a constant source of amusement to L. G.. When asked what he thought of the baby, he replied,

<sup>1</sup> On May 7th, in a letter to the Press, Major-General Sir F. Maurice, Director of Military Operations at the War Office, accused Mr. Lloyd George of giving incorrect figures relating to reinforcements sent to France during the winter. Mr. Asquith took up the challenge, but the demand for an inquiry fell through when Mr. Lloyd George proved that his figures had been supplied in writing by General Maurice's own deputy.

"I don't think much of it. Her face is red. Evidently she has been drinking!"

12TH.—Dined with L. G.. Much distressed at the loss of so many gallant men. We spoke of Captain Ball's<sup>1</sup> letters. L. G. said that he could hardly bear to read them. Ball had been to breakfast with him. He was a delightful, modest man, and L. G. deplored his loss.

We talked of the position in the House of Commons.

R.: Notwithstanding all criticism, the House of Commons is sound in its decisions. It has been so all through the war. It may be rather an old-fashioned house owing to the date when it was elected, but it almost invariably does the right thing.

P. KERR: I agree with you that the House of Commons, broadly speaking, represents the opinion of the people.

L. G.: I think so, too. Of course the present situation is difficult. No Government can be always right, particularly in such times as these, and one would like to feel that one had the support of a Party who would be prepared to stand by the Government on those occasions which must inevitably occur in which there may be ground for criticism. The Maurice incident was of course exceptional, but you have no idea of the amount of work involved in getting up the case for a reply. You want a body of men who are prepared to view what you do with a benevolent eye and who believe that you are honestly trying to do your best. That is all I ask. In this division I think I had 90 Liberals as against Asquith's 106, and he is leader of the Party.

[SOME TIME IN APRIL 1918.—Called upon French at the Horse Guards, when he told me that three Commissioners were to be appointed to administer Ireland. Himself, Midleton,<sup>2</sup> and another. The vacant position had been offered to Campbell, the Irish judge, who had declined. It was now on offer to Ross, another Irish judge. French said that he had made all preparations to quell an Irish insurrection. I said, "How about

<sup>1</sup> Captain Albert Ball, V.C., the brilliant airman, who destroyed 39 enemy machines in one day, and was killed by "Richtofen's Circus" on May 7th, 1917, three months before his 21st birthday.

<sup>2</sup> Now the Earl of Midleton. Served on Irish Convention, 1917-18.



conscription?" French answered, "Home Rule will be offered and declined. Then conscription will be enforced. If they will leave me alone, I can do what is necessary. I have made all my plans. I shall notify a date before which all recruits must offer themselves in the various districts. If they do not come, we shall fetch them. Claims to exemption will be tried in England, not in Ireland."]

Sir Eric Geddes has been much disturbed by the criticisms passed upon him. L. G. remarked, "I know how to value criticism. I know what it means when they say I am the most unscrupulous and inept Minister who has ever shaped the destinies of this country. I know they have been saying the same thing about all Prime Ministers ever since the office was created. I am not in the least disturbed by such vituperation, but the novice is much distressed and thinks that all this violent language was specially invented to crack his small nut. The cleverest thing said about the Maurice incident was the remark of a Tory Member about me, 'They have caught the little devil telling the truth!' That is so clever that I don't resent it."

P. KERR: Has your Ministry lasted as long or longer than you thought it would?

L. G.: It is now eighteen months old and it has lasted longer than I thought; and I had more faith in its longevity than most people.

SUNDAY, MAY 1918.—Dined with L. G.. Found him reposing in the garden. After some talk he got up and walked with rapid steps up and down the garden paths while I sat talking to Mrs. L. G., who remarked, "He is preparing his speech for Edinburgh. He always walks about in that rapid way when he is getting a speech ready." L. G. spoke of the political intrigues which are on foot against him. "I can play that game as well as, if not better than, they can—in fact I have done so; but now I am devoting all my thoughts and energy to the war. Nothing else matters. (Then, laughing) I don't know about the wisdom of the dove, but I have some of the craftiness of the serpent."

Much talk on orators. L. G. thinks that Briand is the most attractive speaker in Europe; he has such a perfect voice.

**May 1918]**

**LORD RIDDELL'S WAR DIARY**

MONDAY, MAY 1918.—L. G. just back from Scotland. In high spirits. He, Philip Kerr, and I played golf with James Braid, the pro.. L. G. played remarkably well, so that they were out in 36, a score with which Braid himself might well have been satisfied. L. G. full of fun, but very anxious about the military situation in France, which he regards as most serious. Dined with him after we returned.

## Chapter XXXVIII

*L. G. meditates on a National Party—His part in Nivelle's great offensive—Talk of peace terms—Clemenceau's police agents—F. E. and the Lord Chancellorship—A conference in the country—Smuts's mission to Switzerland.*

JUNE 7TH, 1918.—Presided at the 91st Anniversary of the Printers' Pension Fund. Record subscription, £16,000. A most successful evening. The P.M. came and delivered a fine speech and had a wonderful reception. He told me that he had come only to please me, which was very nice of him. He had to leave early. As the car was late he walked part of the way. A large crowd followed him, and he was much amused by a small girl who called out, "Hullo! Are you Charlie Chaplin?"

8TH.—L. G. and P. Kerr lunched with me, and we played golf later, L. G. going home to have a sleep in the afternoon. He has been in France this last week. He said that Foch was more anxious when he last saw him than he had been on any previous occasion. L. G. himself seemed very anxious and spoke frequently of hearing the guns, the sound of which was very apparent. He said that he had to leave the dinner early to speak on the telephone to Milner, who was in France.

9TH.—Dined with L. G.. Found him walking in the garden with Carodoc Rees, a Welsh M.P., a barrister—a nice man. L. G. said that a great battle<sup>1</sup> had begun and that the French were having a hard time. He continually referred to this during the evening and said it was a very anxious time. General Wilson came to Walton to see him last evening. Milner was expected, but did not come. L. G.'s anxiety as to whether he could find dinner for them rather amusing. I arranged, if they came, to feed them, if necessary, but Mrs. L. G., to whom I spoke on the telephone, said she could manage if L. G. was willing to go short on the following day (to-day Sunday). To this he agreed, and so all was well. As it was we

<sup>1</sup> Battle of the Matz.

did not have to endure short commons; Wilson did not stay to dinner. L. G. said he had been reading the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and read out some passages accompanied by shrewd comments, including a short dissertation on Bunyan's jury and the reasons they gave for their verdict. Closing the book, L. G. remarked, "That old tinker [Bunyan] was one of the shrewdest men that ever lived."

We talked of the political situation. I said, "The Opposition are much more moderate than they were. Perhaps they have had a shock, or perhaps they are like a child who is unusually quiet—they are up to some mischief. I have heard that they are looking to a snap division to improve their position. L. G. said he agreed that the Opposition had been more moderate, and that he too had been speculating as to their next move. I said, "It is very noticeable that Pringle and Hogge, the skirmishing brigade, have been very silent of late." L. G. thinks that the Asquithians may be negotiating with the Irish, and said that Herbert Samuel had recently been in Ireland.

17TH.—Dined as usual. Much talk about Parliament. L. G. said that the management of Parliament in war time was often difficult. Some of the Members are now putting questions which are conveying information to the enemy.

R.: That danger could be surmounted quite easily. Such questions could be suppressed and answered privately, or by reference to a number instead of giving the question itself.

L. G.: That might be done.

R.: Parliament, with all its defects, is the nation's watchdog. Unfortunately the watchdog had allowed himself to be chained up, with the result that the newspapers are performing his functions.

L. G.: What did you think of Asquith's speech at the Aldwych Club?

R.: Conventional. But he had a good reception.

L. G.: I thought the speech turgid. It was evidently carefully prepared; it smelt of the lamp. I don't understand what he means by implying that we are keeping something back. I know of nothing that we are keeping back.

L. G. thinks that before long there must be a General

Election. We must have a Parliament which represents the views of the people.

To-day L. G. had lunch with Beaverbrook. Montagu was there and Hulton,<sup>1</sup> the newspaper proprietor, who lives near Beaverbrook. L. G. spoke very favourably of Milner's last speech, which he described as excellent. He thinks that Milner improves every day.

23RD.—Dined with L. G. and wife. In the afternoon he had been to London to a meeting at the Welsh Chapel, where he made a short extempore speech, parts of which he repeated, making a pointed reference to his simile of the three men who had been in the fiery furnace—Shadrach and Co. (He said when they came out they did not quarrel; they shared fairly what there was to share. The richer, middle, and lower classes must do the same after the war. They must not fight for the spoil as they did before the war.) I said, "A very pretty analogy," but privately I doubted its accuracy. There will be the same fights as there were. No one is prepared to give up. At least I see no evidence of their willingness, and I see signs of discontent amongst the returned soldiers. Evidently L. G. is meditating a national party in which he will endeavour to weld together all these classes. Everyone is to be satisfied. The rich must give to the poor, but the poor must not ask too much. They must be good children. I wonder!

L. G.: Beaverbrook has been very useful to me. B. L. says that he is the cleverest man he has ever met. His admiration for him is unbounded and he is greatly under his influence. It was he who made B. L. decide to break up the Asquith Government. B. L.'s method was very moderate, it is true, and Mr. A. might have saved himself, but was misled by his friends.

Donald of the *Daily Chronicle* asked me to call upon him to-day, which I did. He told me that the sale of the *Chronicle* had been discussed. The negotiators gave the purchaser's name as Lord Leverhulme. Later Mr. Lloyd, the owner of the *Chronicle*, discovered that Leverhulme's name had been used without his sanction. Thereupon Lloyd broke off the negotiations. The price was to have been £450,000 (the existing

<sup>1</sup> Sir Edward Hulton, Bart.; d. 1925.

debentures and preference shares) plus £900,000 for the ordinary shares, making in all £1,350,000.

L. G.: A few days ago Alec Murray sent me a remarkable paper—General Nivelle's account of what happened when he was Commander-in-Chief.<sup>1</sup> A remarkable story. Nivelle is in Algiers. Murray got the story direct from him.

R.: I read this story some time ago in an American paper; it looked as if it had been communicated by Nivelle. Your name was freely mentioned. It was said that the French Government stopped or were about to stop the offensive owing to the losses which were taking place, and that you went post-haste to France in order to arrange for them to proceed.

L. G.: Quite true. I did. They said they would go on, but I distrusted them.

29TH.—L. G. has met Kerensky. He says he has the most piercing eyes he has ever seen. K. is an attractive personality, but L. G. does not regard him as a man of action.

30TH.—Dined as usual. We had an interesting conversation on the length of the war.

L. G.: Weir<sup>2</sup> said some good things on Friday (I think Friday). He said that the aviators can now aim much more accurately and can make sure of striking an object within a radius of thirty yards from a height of 12,000 feet.

P. KERR: There is no doubt that if the war lasts for another two or three years, we shall have a hot time.

R.: It looks as if it might be over in twelve months unless the Germans secure a marked success on the Western Front before December. They will see that they are bound to succumb sooner or later to the rapid growth of the American armies. How long do you think the war will last, Prime Minister?

L. G. (laughing): I will write my answer on a piece of paper to be sealed up and opened after the war. But I don't agree with you. In considering the problem I try to feel my-

<sup>1</sup> Nivelle, having succeeded Joffre on December 12th, 1916, undertook a great offensive on the Aisne in the following April, with the object of clearing the Germans out of France. He promised success in forty-eight hours, but the attack was a costly failure and Nivelle was relieved of his command.

<sup>2</sup> Now Lord Weir; Secretary for Air, April to December 1918.

self in the position of a German statesman. How would he be likely to regard it? The Germans have great victories to their credit and they have been led to expect more. They think they are winning. How is their view to be changed? Von Kühlmann<sup>1</sup> made the attempt, and you see what happened to him. I think he honestly believed what he said. The hypothetical statesman would receive the illustrious order of the boot. It is a dangerous game. If you break the morale of the people and the peace move does not come off, you are done. Things are different now from what they were in the old days; now you have to conduct your diplomacy in public. Formerly a little junta could decide on peace; to-day you have to obtain the approval of millions of people. That makes negotiations very difficult.

R.: I agree. But the German statesman would see the red light ahead and would know that the chances were that he would meet disaster before long.

L. G.: Yes, but if you were faced with the alternative of certain death now and problematical death two years hence, which would you prefer? Of course you would take your chance and rely on something turning up.

R.: Yes, there is one war maxim which has not been blown upon—"The unexpected always happens." At the same time, much will depend upon the internal conditions of the different countries. Austria is obviously in a bad way. That will react on Germany. In this country you may have a strong peace movement if you push the Germans back, and the same remark applies to France. You will have to reckon with war weariness and the desire to get back to ordinary life. At the moment, with the Germans victorious, those feelings are suppressed. Danger makes all think alike.

L. G.: Yes, but let us come to concrete facts. What peace do you suggest the Germans would propose?

R.: Evacuation of northern France, and Belgium, repatriation of Belgium, the formation of Alsace-Lorraine into a separate State, with equal trading rights for all nations.

L. G.: Ponsonby,<sup>2</sup> the pacifist, asked to see me the other

<sup>1</sup> Baron von Kühlmann was German Foreign Secretary from July 1917 to July 1918.

<sup>2</sup> Now Lord Ponsonby.



DANNY, HAS SOCKS, SUSSEX.





day. I saw him. I feel it to be my duty to see any Member of Parliament who wishes to see me on a subject of importance. He was very pleasant and friendly. He spoke of peace and urged me to use my influence in that direction or, at any rate, not to place obstacles in the way. I said to him, "Events, not men, will shape our destinies. You over-estimate my importance. In this matter I am the creature of events. As things are, if I were to endeavour to make peace, I should be swept from office by the British people. They are a stubborn, brave race and will not accept defeat." I also had a nice talk with old John Morley. He is a delightful old boy. He said at the outset of our conversation, "No politics! Let us keep our talk to the period before the war."

We talked of Clemenceau.

L. G.: He is a remarkable old man; full of vitality and energy—a real human tiger. He governs in the old-fashioned way. He gives no quarter and expects none. He is surrounded by enemies, but he is the most powerful man in France. He has revived the old espionage methods, so they tell me. His police agents watch and report on the doings not only of his enemies and opponents, but also on those of some of his colleagues, and he does not scruple to use the information.

We once more discussed a General Election. L. G. said that many of the younger members of the Conservative Party favour an arrangement whereby L. G. would be placed at the head of a definite Party and a definite organisation. His thoughts lie in the same direction, but he sees a difficulty with the Liberals—he feels that he can depend on a certain number of the Liberal members, but the creation of a new Party with a new organisation would bring about an absolute and definite split.

I have taken Danny, Hurstpierpoint, for the summer for L. G. and self. We spoke of our doings of last summer.

JULY 11TH, 1918.—An amusing and characteristic talk with F. E. We spoke of Sir Edward Clarke.

F. E.: I had the offer of the position of the Master of the Rolls, but I did not take it. Clarke says it was offered to him and declined. When I had the offer I said to L. G. and Rufus,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lord Reading.

who was with him, "Let me have the offer in writing and I will decline in writing." Thereupon, L. G. wrote, "I offer you the position of Master of the Rolls," and I wrote underneath it, "Many thanks for your kindness, but I cannot take it." I have the paper now, so that in my case there is no mistake. If Finlay were to die and I were offered the position of Lord Chancellor, I should not take it for three reasons.

1. Because I could not live on the pension. I have no money and I am extravagant. At the Bar I can make £30,000 per annum. If we went out of office, I should be reduced to £5,000.

2. I hate the law. I am successful as a lawyer because I am a very clever man and can therefore grasp legal problems as most others would fail to do. When I became Attorney-General many people said, "He will fail. He knows no law." They did not know my educational record in the law and they did not realise that a very clever man can always grapple successfully with a difficult task.

3. I hate dignity. I like to live my life in my own way.<sup>1</sup>

Reference was made to S. T. Evans,<sup>2</sup> President of the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Court.

F. E.: He is a nice fellow and a good judge. He has done splendid work in the Prize Court. He is the sort of man who can enjoy himself at night and appear in Court the next morning just as if he had gone to bed at 10 p.m.

R.: By the way, you promised me a copy of your legal opinions as Attorney-General, but you have not sent it.

F. E.: You shall have it. The book is not yet ready. You will be the only private person who will have a copy. You must add a codicil to your will leaving it to me should you predecease me.

R.: That I promise.

13TH AND 14TH. *At Danny.*—The 14th (Sunday) a busy and exciting day. L. G. sent Hankey post-haste to Canterbury to fetch Milner. Urgent telephone messages were also dis-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Birkenhead became Lord Chancellor in 1919 and resigned with the Government in 1922; d. 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Rt. Hon. Sir Samuel Evans; d. 1918.

patched asking Sir Robert Borden,<sup>1</sup> Smuts, and General Wilson to come. Later they arrived, Smuts having travelled from Oxford, Borden from London, and Wilson from Henley. Wilson brought with him General Radcliffe.<sup>2</sup> Borden and Smuts arrived in the afternoon, Milner in time for dinner, and Wilson and Radcliffe at 9 p.m. In the afternoon, the P.M., Borden, and Smuts climbed to the top of the high hill on the Downs at the back of the house. The P.M. and Borden returned covered with perspiration and forthwith had to bathe. After dinner, the party assembled in the hall and sat in conference with Hankey and Philip Kerr until after midnight, the subject of discussion being the disposal of the American troops, the major part of which have been placed by Foch in the rear of the French Armies. L. G.'s contention is that this disposition is unfair to the British, who have brought over 600,000 of them, and thus the result will be to place our Army in a dangerous position should we be attacked. His proposal was to send Borden and Smuts to see Clemenceau. From what I gathered, Milner was averse to any such action on our part. L. G. seemed dissatisfied with what had taken place at the conference. Wilson, Radcliffe, and Smuts returned to London. The others remained for the night, starting back to town at 8.30. Wilson looks much older and bears evidence of the strain of the past few months. I had a long talk with Borden, who gave me an interesting account of his political career. He is a clear-headed, sensible man and I should say courageous. He seems a kindly person and shows no side. He says that he is on friendly terms with Laurier. L. G. is remarkably well and full of energy. The telephone was going all day as usual, and he spent a considerable time reading official papers. The rumour that he never reads anything is absurd. He is always at work. His knack of sleeping at odd times is no doubt responsible for his vitality. He has a wonderful memory, and to-day raked up the names of the characters and incidents in several *causes célèbres* which took place twenty years ago.

20TH AND 21ST. *Danny again.*—L. G. very busy in

<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister of Canada, 1911–20.

<sup>2</sup> Lieut.-General Sir Percy Radcliffe, Director of Military Operations War Office, 1918–22.

preparing suggestions for a dispatch to President Wilson regarding Japanese intervention. It was interesting to see him at work with his legs cocked up in the window seat of the dining-room. As he read the message from Wilson he made comments to Philip Kerr and gave him instructions for the suggested reply. On Sunday morning Kerr drafted the memorandum and took it to Esher, where Arthur Balfour is staying with Lord D'Abernon. I accompanied Kerr, who dropped me at Walton Heath, picking me up again on his return journey. He found A. J. B. playing tennis and not at all pleased at being disturbed. On the journey Kerr gave me an interesting account of Lionel Curtis,<sup>1</sup> who is chiefly responsible for Montagu's scheme for Indian Reform. Kerr says that Curtis is a practical idealist, that he has already done big things in South Africa, and that more will be heard of him. He describes him as being very able and very persistent.

Last week Mrs. L. G. came to Danny, and this week she and my wife came, also Megan and a friend. In the afternoon, while Kerr and I were out, Eric Geddes arrived and had a long talk with the P.M.. I had a long interview with Geddes at the Admiralty on Tuesday, when he bitterly complained that the Navy does not receive adequate recognition in the Press, with the result that our people and the Allies do not appreciate what has been done. I agreed, but said that the Navy was to blame, and told him of my campaign for publicity and of the letter from the Chief Censor, in which he said that the Navy did not want publicity. This rather stumped Geddes, who of course pointed out that this took place before he went to the Admiralty. I said I appreciated that. I explained to him what he should do, viz. (1) take the matter in hand himself; (2) get the P.M. to make a speech explaining what the Navy has done; and (3) see the editors and make a statement to them. He said he would. He gave me a long explanation concerning naval activities, but rather prophesied that the submarine attack may become more acute. Geddes is a clear-headed, forcible man—one of the best of the Ministers. He is a busi-

<sup>1</sup> Formerly the Town Clerk of Johannesburg and Member of Transvaal Legislative Council; Secretary to the Irish Conference, 1921, and adviser on Irish affairs in Colonial Office, 1921-24.

ness man with drive, knowledge of organisation, and no prejudices in favour of existing methods.

I found L. G. in the dining-room. He told me that Smuts had been to Switzerland some time ago to meet —, a leading Austrian statesman, to discuss peace terms. — was not the official representative of the Austrian Government, but no doubt they were glad to make use of him. It is just as if Asquith or Runciman were to go on such a mission. Our Government would not directly countenance such a move, but would not discourage it and would be glad to know what happened.

29TH.—L. G. spoke in high terms of John Bright's speeches. He said that Bright was a master in stating a case, and that he always made his meaning perfectly clear, which most speakers, from design or incompetence, fail to do. L. G. then got a volume of Bright's speeches from the library and read me extracts, making comments as he did so.

L. G.: Just note the little intimate touches which he introduces. "I met a man in the Lobby who said so-and-so." "I have just received a letter in which the writer tells me, etc." That is most valuable in enabling a speaker to get on intimate terms with his audience. Just listen to this (reading the peroration to Bright's speech on the American Civil War). Isn't that fine stuff?

R.: Would it be suitable for the present time? Is it too oratorical? I don't suggest that it is, but what do you think?

L. G.: I think it would have a great reception. He was discussing a great issue. The language was worthy of the occasion. The public like a high tone when a great moral issue is involved. A clear style is a remarkable asset. I have been reading the letters of a very different man—Byron. Let me read you some extracts (reading). Is not that good? How well he puts his point!

R.: I was looking at the book. I see that you marked it up. When did you do that?

L. G.: Years ago when I first read it. Have you read the letters?

R.: Yes, thirty years ago. I read them in Byron's Life by Moore.

L. G.: I must have read them about the same time. I am

pleased to see that I now most admire the passages I marked at that time. Palmerston was a clear speaker. He did not believe in the Foreign Office style. He said what he meant. That did not please the Queen, who would have preferred him to wrap up his meaning in the language of diplomacy.

In the evening L. G. read out to us some passages from Macaulay's Essays, a favourite book of his. He reads well and his comments are fresh and interesting. I said, "Macaulay is the exponent of the modern journalistic style. Clarity and high lights!"

L. G.: Yes, his first object was to be interesting. His second to hit hard.

We talked much of the forthcoming election. L. G. is now full of it, and palpitating with energetic enthusiasm. His vitality is wonderful. He is like a skilful prize-fighter in the ring. He is all over the arena, defending here and attacking there.

## Chapter XXXIX

*L. G. on the qualities of a War Minister—A coal shortage—Metropolitan Police strike—Election preparations—The question of the poorer classes—How L. G. nearly became a preacher—The nation's debt to Lord Maclay.*

AUGUST 3RD, 1918.—L. G. proposes to go to Criccieth for a fortnight's holiday and then return to Danny for September. He often talks of the qualities necessary for a great War Minister—courage, energy, optimism, decision, and so on, and frequently instances Earl Chatham as being the 'greatest War Minister of modern times. But he never mentions one quality possessed by both Chatham and himself—an indispensable characteristic in a great War Minister, but one fraught with danger in ordinary times. The expense of the war never seems to enter into his calculations. He rejoices in the sacrifices and efforts which he induces his countrymen to make. The question of the price never enters into his contemplation; the object to be achieved is the only thing that matters. This gives him a great advantage over men who count the cost before they act. He is never hampered by ordinary commercial restraints.

L. G. has just come back from the Eisteddfod at Neath. Very proud of his reception, which he described as magnificent. He said he made eight speeches in two days. More than once he remarked, "The people of this country seem very friendly to me at the moment. How long my popularity will continue, it is difficult to say."

R.: Mr. Gladstone's continued for many years.

L. G.: Yes, but he had his ups and his downs. I suppose I shall have the same. The public are fickle.

R.: And influenced often by things over which the popular hero has no control.

L. G.: Yes, the accidents of life. Look at Chamberlain. He is not likely to live, and yet he was a great man. His trouble



was that he came up against Mr. Gladstone, who was a very big man, and then events went against him.

R.: If Chamberlain had not broken with Gladstone, Chamberlain's career would have been very different, and the state of Ireland might have been very different.

L. G.: Yes, there were faults on both sides. Mr. G. treated Chamberlain with contempt, and Joe did not see what he was facing.

In the afternoon we drove around the coast by Beachy Head.

6TH.—We had Sir Robert Borden at Danny for the night. He has a remarkable knowledge of the cathedrals of this country, and greatly surprised L. G., who asked him if he had visited Winchester. Borden is an able, sensible man. L. G. thinks him very good in council. He is essentially a safe man. He leaves for Canada in a few days. He says he has much to see to.

I had an interesting talk with Philip Kerr about the war. He said, "I hope there will not be a row between L. G. and Foch. Foch will, I am sure, brook no interference."

R.: Have you read Lincoln's Life, and do you remember the letter written to him by General Grant, in which the latter said that as Commander-in-Chief he intended to call the tune, and that unless he were permitted to do so, he should resign? The situation may, I suppose, develop on the same lines?

KERR: Yes, that is what I mean.

7TH.—Long interview with Stanley,<sup>1</sup> President of the Board of Trade, who says that the coal situation is very serious and it is absolutely necessary there should be a press campaign in favour of economy in the use of coal. I arranged to issue a press notice of a speech which he had made during the afternoon which contained important references to the coal situation. I also advised him to see some of the editors personally and endeavour to secure a skilled journalist who would undertake the control of the Publicity Department. I suggested he should ask Marlowe, editor of the *Daily Mail*, to lend him Fish,<sup>2</sup> the news editor. Stanley said he would ask Marlowe to lunch

<sup>1</sup> Sir Albert Stanley. Now Lord Ashfield.

<sup>2</sup> Walter George Fish, later editor of the *Daily Mail*.

to-morrow. I also urged upon Stanley the necessity for endeavouring to increase the output, and told him I was informed that many of the owners were working the more difficult and less profitable seams, hoping thereby to escape the incidence of the Excess Profits Tax and Mineral Tax. I suggested that the coal production required to be strengthened. He agreed, and said he thought my information correct. He commented upon Rhondda's<sup>1</sup> success with the Press. I said it was due in a great measure to getting the right people to manage his Publicity Department and also to the trouble he took in interviewing journalists and giving them personal explanations. I suggested to Stanley that he should get the Prime Minister to issue a statement to the nation on the coal question, urging the people to store and use wood, peat, and other alternative fuels. He said he would do this.

8TH.—Letter from Stanley thanking me, and saying he had secured the services of Fish.

12TH.—Dined with Mr. Waterbury, an American banker. Northcliffe was there, together with Waterbury's two daughters. N. very affable. He says that his throat is still troublesome, due to bronchitis. He seemed quite friendly to L. G., although the latter has been told that Northcliffe had the idea a short time ago of endeavouring to bring down the Government. Milner told L. G. this. Personally I doubt the story.

13TH.—The conversation turned on the philosophy of life.

L. G. (to Philip Kerr): What is your philosophy of life, and what is Riddell's philosophy of life?

KERR: Riddell gave a good answer to someone who asked him in my presence what he valued most. He replied, "First, good health; second, a happy disposition; third, money; and fourth, the art of being interesting and being interested." I think I should subscribe to that also.

L. G.: Well, I have no philosophy of life beyond "Follow your nose." That is a pretty sage maxim.

13TH AND 14TH.—Much talk with the P.M. regarding the forthcoming election. Sir Henry Norman is to organise the campaign. L. G. says that Norman has written quite a good

<sup>1</sup> Viscount Rhondda, Food Controller, 1917-18; d. July 1918.

memorandum. L. G. absolutely exuding energy and enthusiasm. He has a wonderful way of getting things moving; a sort of all-pervading energy. He is going to Criccieth for a few days, after which he returns to Danny, which he has enjoyed very much, so he says. While he is away he is going to read up reconstruction, and prepare his opening speech, which he will make at Manchester.

R.: Are you going to deal with Free Trade and Protection?

L. G.: Only very generally. The time is not yet ripe. How can you tell what the conditions will be after the war? The chances are that the world, including Great Britain and her colonies, will be crying out for goods and materials. How can you say now what will be to our interest? And then you must consider the feelings of our Allies. The French in particular are very suspicious. Clemenceau is suspicious by nature. Nothing must be said which might tend to give offence.

R.: You will be on safer ground in dealing with the condition of the working-classes.

L. G.: Quite true. The statistics given me by Sir Auckland Geddes are most disquieting. They show that the physique of the people of this country is far from what it should be, particularly in the agricultural districts where the inhabitants should be the strongest. That is due to low wages, malnutrition, and bad housing. It will have to be put right after the war. I have always stood during the whole of my life for the under-dog. I have not changed, and am going still to fight his battle. Both parties will have to understand that. We have set up a Committee to consider a programme, and I shall make a strong point, a very strong point, of what I have just said to you.

R.: Needless to say, I rejoice to hear that. You will have to consider, however, the Local Government Board housing scheme, which is a futile proposal. Unless you throw it overboard you will be open to criticism. Wages is a more difficult question. You can build houses, but, apart from minimum-wage schemes, you cannot regulate wages.

L. G.: I agree as to both points. They require very careful consideration.

I had to reply for the Press at a dinner given by Burnham. Hughes, the Australian Premier, proposed the toast. In reply I chaffed him regarding his knowledge of the Press and their knowledge of him. Afterwards he congratulated me, but I thought he did not like what I had said.

17TH.—Jack Seely, his wife, and Lord Gainford spent the afternoon with me at Walton. J. S. as optimistic as ever and as kind and genial. He wanted my opinion on the statement made to him by ——— and his people to the effect that the country is on the verge of revolution. I said I did not believe it, and thought that ——— wanted a holiday, being absolutely worn out.

Owing to pressure from me, the Ministry of Munitions have at last set up a decent Press and Publicity Department. Seely said that he and Winston were much obliged for my help.

AUGUST 1918.—L. G. back from Wales. His return signalled by a strike of the Metropolitan Police, who assembled in great force in Downing Street and assumed a very menacing attitude. This made the occupants feel that they were really face to face with a revolution. The Police came out on the Friday, which prevented L. G. going to Danny as intended. The strike was settled on the Saturday, so we started in the evening.

I congratulated L. G. on settling the strike.

L. G.: The whole thing has been disgracefully mismanaged. The terms granted by me had been agreed upon for some time past, but the men had never been told.

Eric Geddes came to lunch and drove with L. G. to inspect some new invention at Shoreham. They returned earlier than was expected. Their arrival was announced by L. G. stealing into the drawing-room with his hat pulled down over his eyebrows and his coat collar up, as if he were a burglar. Sir Robert McAlpine<sup>1</sup> and two of his sons also to lunch. We had some pleasant talk after tea concerning superstitions, in the course of which some good stories were related. Sir Eric Geddes showed himself in a new light by repeating a story told him by

<sup>1</sup> Sir Robert McAlpine, Bart., head of McAlpine & Sons, Government and Public Works Contractors.

a Brazilian admiral, which has to be illustrated by a paper design. This Sir Eric cut with great deliberation, and at length successfully produced a cross representing King Edward's passport to Heaven and the word Hell representing that of the Kaiser. Everyone thrilled, including the P.M., who insisted on a careful note being taken of the manner in which these surprising results are achieved. Geddes strikes me as shrewd, able, and very effective. I think him one of the best of the Ministers. His methods are simple and direct. He gave an interesting account of Lord Pirrie<sup>1</sup> and his wife. He says they are devoted to each other—that Lady P. always travels with her husband and always takes his lunch to the office and lays it out with her own hand. Neither L. G. nor Geddes seems quite sure about Pirrie. I said, "Is he the real thing nowadays, or is he a back number?" To this I got no satisfactory reply. Geddes, in fact, admitted that he did not know. When Pirrie was first appointed, Geddes was amazed at the amount of nonsense he talked, but Geddes soon discovered that this was the old boy's way—a smoke-screen to obscure his thoughts, as I remarked. He also discovered that the shipbuilding world quietened down in the most remarkable way. Whether this is due to Pirrie's ability or to the financial control which he exercises, Geddes does not know—of course much depends on this. L. G. said that Milner, who had an interview with Pirrie, came to him (L. G.) and said that Pirrie had talked an awful lot of nonsense. L. G. said, "Yes, but did you get what you wanted or did Pirrie get what he wanted?" Milner had to admit that Pirrie had had his way. L. G. told Milner that different men had different methods, and that you could only judge by results.

Later L. G. said he had reason to believe that Northcliffe was anxious to enter the Cabinet, but that he would be difficult to work with if he could not have his own way. L. G. said Arthur Balfour would be more useful, as he had the art of analysing a subject and stating the argument for and against with great power and skill. "His mind is opposed to action,"

<sup>1</sup> Later Viscount Pirrie, Chairman of Harland & Wolff, shipbuilders and engineers; Comptroller-General of Merchant Shipbuilding, March 1918; d. 1924.

said L. G., "but I can decide, and such a discussion is of the utmost value."

Much talk about a General Election. L. G. is strongly in favour of an appeal to the country in November, and commented upon the obvious fear of an election on the part of Henderson and the Asquithians. L. G. proposes to hold a meeting of the Liberal Party to ascertain who is prepared to support him. He also proposes to make an arrangement with the Tories as to the seats which are to be left to their candidates. He says the Tories have loyally supported him, and he proposes to be equally loyal to them. He hopes to carry with him 120 of the Liberals. The issue at the election will really be who is to run the war. Is it to be L. G., Bonar Law, and their associates, or Asquith, McKenna, Runciman, and others who act with them? L. G. spoke again of his domestic programme and read extracts from Auckland Geddes's report on the physical condition of the people, from which it appeared that only 750,000 out of 2,000,000 men are fit for service, also that in the districts devoted to the cotton industry the men showed distinct signs of decay soon after 30 instead of after 50, as they properly should do. In other words, they are twenty years worse in physical condition than they should be. L. G. said, "I shall make it plain that I shall not be a party to the continuance of such a condition of affairs. It is useless to fight this war unless the condition of the poorer classes is to be improved." He is to make all this plain in his speech at Manchester on September 12th.

In the afternoon of Monday we went for a motor drive to Beachy Head, where we had tea in the open, taking with us a kettle, etc.. L. G. is very fond of these picnics, and gave the subject much consideration to-day, viz. how the tea was to be made, what sort of a kettle we should take with us, etc.. His vitality is wonderful. On Saturday, after settling the Police strike, he was full of conversation all the way down in the car, and yesterday and to-day was in the highest spirits. He is always ready to discuss politics or business. On Saturday and Sunday nights he read me extracts from Strachey's book on French Literature, which I gave him. He is very pleased with the book and considers the author one of the best modern writers.

L. G.: I belong to a curious religious body—the Disciples of Christ. It was founded in America by a man named Campbell. Its peculiarity is that it has no paid preachers and no dogma. Its members take the Bible as it stands, and everyone is entitled to interpret it for himself.

R.: Do they baptise?

L. G.: There is some sort of baptism, but there is a verbal question which I do not quite remember. They attach great importance, I think, to baptising *into* the name of the Father, the Son, etc., instead of *in* the name of the Father, etc.. I do not remember the point of it all. It is very curious that only by accident was I prevented from becoming a preacher. My father was an ordinary Baptist. He died, and as you know, my uncle took my mother and her children to live with him. He belonged to this strange little sect—the Disciples of Christ—so that I became one of the disciples. As a boy, my great ambition was to be a preacher. In our part of the country we regarded preachers as the most important people in the world—far more important than politicians or soldiers. As a boy, I admired and revered the great preachers; I was never tired of listening to them. But the difficulty was that in our sect you could not become a preacher unless you were able to support yourself by your private means or earnings. The preachers in the sect are not allowed to make any charge for their services. Consequently, as I had to earn my living, I was unable to fulfil my ambition. Otherwise who knows? I might have become one of the leading preachers of the day!

R.: I hope you have not been disappointed?

L. G.: No. But one's ambitions are varied by circumstances. As a boy, mine was to become a great preacher. If I had succeeded I suppose I should have been satisfied—at least as satisfied as people are when they attain their ambitions.

L. G. was loud in his praises of Sir Joseph Maclay, the Shipping Controller, who, he said, had worked miracles. L. G. described him as a truly wonderful man.

L. G.: When Wilson agreed to send the troops I sent for Maclay and told him that Wilson would send the troops, but that we should have to carry the bulk of them. I said, "Can we do it?" Sir Joseph, in his quiet way, said, "When do you

want to know, Prime Minister?" I answered, "As soon as possible." He said, "Very well. I will let you know at 6 o'clock to-night." At 6 o'clock he came and said he could do it, and he did it. Maclay was the man who told me what was wrong at the Admiralty. I thought things were wrong, but I did not know the cause. He came and told me. Then I knew what to do. Owing to the delay in adopting the convoy system, we lost hundreds of thousands of tons of shipping. It was said that merchant sea captains had never been accustomed to sail in line and would ram each other, and indeed that the losses caused by such a system would exceed the gains. At last we got the Admiralty to call a meeting of the captains. They called captains of liners, who rather looked down on the captains of tramps. The liner captains confirmed the Admiralty opinion. But what was the result when we did introduce the system? We have saved scores upon scores of ships. But to revert to Maclay. The way in which he has managed our shipping has been remarkable. He has been one of the successes of the war, and the nation owes him a debt of gratitude.

R.: Hankey is also entitled to a share, and a large share, of the credit, for the convoy system, which saved the nation. He had the idea and, in the face of fierce opposition, continually urged its adoption.

L. G.: Yes, quite correct. For the moment I had forgotten. Hankey is one of the great figures in the war.



## Chapter XL

*L. G.'s opinion of Foch—Bonar Law's health—The Austrian Peace Note—The art of succeeding in politics—Talk of another coalition—Bulgaria sues for peace—The telegram that "saved Europe."*

SEPTEMBER 4TH, 5TH, AND 6TH, 1918.—Winston Churchill and Rothermere at Danny for the night. I drove with Winston in a car lent to him by Abe Bailey,<sup>1</sup> according to Winston the best Rolls-Royce in England. When we reached the open road, Winston got up every few minutes to look at the speedometer, which frequently recorded 30, 40, 50, and even 60 miles an hour. This gave him great satisfaction and altogether shook my faith in my knowledge of speed, based on many years' motoring in fast cars. Next day the explanation emerged. The driver told me that the speedometer registered ten or fifteen miles in advance of the speed. "I have not altered it," he said. Winston often flies. On his last flight across the Channel, the engine gave signs of failure. He described his feelings. "I saw things looked serious. I knew that if the engine ceased to cough we should fall into the sea. We were too low down to have the opportunity to rectify matters. I wondered if I could unstrap myself and unstrap the pilot, and how long the machine would float and how long I could swim after that." "Were you afraid of death?" I said to him. "No," he replied; "I love life, but I don't fear death. Beyond the feelings I have described, I felt a curious calm come over me."

We talked, the three of us, about an election. I said, "The main argument in favour of it is the necessity for a strong, virile House of Commons that will express the views of the people. The House of Commons is their mouthpiece and the natural safety-valve. This argument seemed to weigh with W. and R.. Rothermere now favours an early election.

Much talk about the purchase of the *Daily Chronicle*, on

<sup>1</sup> Sir Abe Bailey, Bart., the South African mine-owner.

which L. G. is very keen. The price is said to be £1,100,000 and the profits roughly about £200,000 per annum, of which about £130,000 is payable in Excess Profits Duty. Sir Henry Dalziel has an option on the paper until October 1st. There seems to be some difficulty in arranging the finance.

Winston has a wonderful eye for the good and striking thing in literature. He recited some of Sassoon's poems with great effect, and has a wonderful memory. He is a kindly creature and very lovable. In the evening we had a long and interesting argument concerning Foch. The P.M. advanced the view that our recent victories are mainly due to Foch's strategy. This Winston denied. He ascribed them to four causes: (1) tanks, (2) deterioration of German Army, (3) valour of British Army, and (4) fighting on a wide battle-line. Much eloquence was displayed by Winston and L. G. in debating the subject. L. G. said, "You [Winston] are echoing the sentiments of G.H.Q. You have changed your tone. Now you are all for Haig." Of course Winston denied this, but ceased contending when L. G. referred to the change in the situation of the Conservative Party in 1874 owing to Disraeli and in 1885 owing to Winston's father. "That shows," said L. G., "how a great man can alter things." The indirect compliment was at once effective, and succeeded where argument had failed. L. G. gave a graphic picture of Foch before the counter-offensive.<sup>1</sup> "He looked rather white and strained," said L. G.; "and well he might, considering his terrible responsibilities. Everyone kept urging him to attack. Everyone was saying, 'What is Foch doing? Foch—whose reputation has been built up on a policy of attack? Where is this army of manœuvre?' But Foch was not to be moved. He went on building up his reserves and did not attack until he was quite prepared. His power of restraint will become historic. He will rank among the great commanders of the world. He hit just at the right time. Balfour asked him on one occasion some question which I [L. G.] forget. Where shall we attack or how, or something of that sort. Foch's reply was characteristic. 'We shall attack here' (striking out with his right hand), 'we shall attack there' (striking out with his left hand). 'We shall

<sup>1</sup> July 1918.

attack here also ' (kicking violently with his right foot), ' and there also ' (kicking violently with his left)."

On the Saturday L. G. pointed out to me an article on the deterioration of the German Army to be read in conjunction with Hindenburg's letter complaining of our propaganda.

Much talk with Winston and Rothermere concerning Beaverbrook. Winston said that Beaverbrook is very disgruntled and may resign in a week. (Credence is given to this by what General Macrae, his head man at the Ministry of Information, said when we lunched together on Thursday.)

When discussing Foch, L. G. remarked, " I often think of Cicero's oration when it was proposed to send Pompey on a campaign. Cicero gave various reasons why Pompey would be a good commander, and concluded ' and lastly he is favoured by the gods.' Some men are lucky and some unlucky. Foch, in addition to his other great qualities, is a lucky man. Look at his record in the war. That suffices! " (I did not say so, but doubted if the record proved this. He has had some bad mishaps, one of which, at any rate, has been bitterly criticised in the French Parliament.)

The Coal Controller told me that the P.M. wished me to see Hartshorn regarding the coal situation, as he thought he would speak more freely to me. Accordingly I had a long interview with him, and subsequently saw him at Downing Street. We walked up and down in the garden for some time, discussing the subject. Then Bonar Law arrived, wearing his slippers. He said he had not been out of the house either yesterday or to-day. He is evidently in a low state owing to the death of his son. I told him that he ought to make a point of going out everyday. He just shrugged his shoulders, as he often does. He is rather a pathetic figure. L. G. says that he feels anxious about him. He has sent Bonar Law's daughter off to Criccieth for a holiday, as her father would not take her away. General Wilson and Lord Robert Cecil also arrived for a Cabinet Meeting. It was curious to see the party standing about in the open air on the stone flags on to which the Cabinet room opens. All very free-and-easy. Hartshorn, the Coal Controller, Sir Adam Nimmo, the new Director of Production, and I had a long talk. We arranged that local meetings should

be held at which the position should be explained to the colliers.

SEPTEMBER 1918.—Called upon Lord Reading, who has been ill for a fortnight—ascribes this to the heat of Washington, of which he gave a vivid description. He says that President Wilson has a very well-balanced mind and a good memory. He hates repetition and redundancy. R. sees trouble ahead with America. We had a long talk regarding an election. R. is evidently opposed to it; he described it as very dangerous.

Wespoke of Sam Evans, President of the Probate, Divorce, and Admiralty Division, who died this week. The L.C.J. said that he was never very intimate with Evans. He thought him a clever Parliamentarian and a good judge.

I knew Evans well. Early in his career he declined to rise when the Royal Toast was drunk at a Mansion House dinner. Republicanism was then the fashion in Radical Clubs. My late partner, Lascelles Carr, threw a glass of wine in Evans's face because he would not rise. The incident created some attention at the time. Evans was very industrious, with a facile, acute mind—not a profound man, but he had the knack of making the best use of his abilities. He was very quick and had considerable powers of expression. He was a Nonconformist, but I never met a more broad-minded person. He was a kindly fellow, and I have known him do old friends, from whom he had nothing to expect, very good turns. The war gave him his opportunity. He read up prize law and expounded it with ability, and he dealt with the new points arising under modern conditions with much skill.

21ST (SATURDAY).—L. G. returned from Manchester, where he has been laid up for a fortnight with influenza. I dined with him at Downing Street. Bonar Law and Sir William Milligan, L. G.'s Manchester doctor, were there. L. G. has had a nasty illness which has shaken him a good deal. He was, however, bright and gay as usual. He made facetious remarks regarding the depressing effect upon a visitor of John Bright's statue dripping with the constant rain that had marked L. G.'s stay in Manchester. Apparently the said statue had been opposite L. G.'s bedroom window. He and Bonar Law talked of our reply to the Austrian Peace Note. (The newspapers

were suddenly called together on Sunday evening by the P.M.'s secretary, when they were told confidentially by Sir Eric Geddes, who had been at Manchester with the P.M., of the contents of the Note and of the views of the Government.) L. G. said the American reply was very brusque, and that he thought a more reasoned answer necessary. Bonar Law agreed. L. G. asked my opinion. I said that for popular consumption in Germany and Austria we might perhaps with advantage recapitulate the effect of the speech in which L. G. stated our peace terms.

B. L.: The Germans are bullies, and when you are getting the best of a bully it is often well to be short and peremptory in your replies to his overtures.

L. G.: On the other hand, the Austrians are getting very sick of the war, and it might be well to let them see what our terms are.

B. L.: I agree, but the other view has been expressed.

L. G.: We must discuss the matter with Arthur Balfour.

B. L.: He was quite willing to go to Manchester.

L. G.: I know, but I did not want to put him to the trouble. Give me a few days to pull myself together, and then you and A. J. B. come down to Danny and we will talk matters over.

Some pleasant conversation on general topics followed.

B. L.: Arthur Balfour hates prepared speeches and in particular those written or committed to memory. Some time ago I was at a dinner at which Clyde,<sup>1</sup> the brilliant Scottish lawyer, made a speech. It was an admirable speech, beautifully phrased. A. J. B., who was there, looked up when Clyde began and was evidently impressed by such good speaking. After a time, however, it was obvious that he had ceased to be interested. Later I inquired the reason. I said, "Was it because you saw that the speech had been committed to memory?" A. J. B. replied, "Yes. I had no more interest when I saw that!"

L. G.: Who was the best speaker in the House of Commons in your time? (This to Bonar Law.)

B. L.: Asquith, I think.

<sup>1</sup> The Rt. Hon. Lord Clyde, Lord-Advocate, Scotland, 1916-20.

L. G.: You never heard Gladstone? In my opinion he far outdistanced everyone else.

B. L.: I suppose that is the general opinion.

R.: What is in your opinion the most important speech delivered in the House of Commons during the past hundred years? A. J. B. says Grey's speech of August 1914.

L. G.: Yes, I agree with that.

B. L.: Yes, I think so too. The issues were stupendous, and the results, in the way of convincing doubters, most remarkable.

Bonar Law said he thought the time had come when he should make a speech to the members of his Party. L. G. agreed.

B. L.: But before I speak we must decide upon our policy. We must both speak with the same voice.

L. G.: Well, next week we can have a talk.

The conversation then turned again to generalities.

B. L.: I said to A. J. B. the other day that the art of humbugging the public is a necessary part of the make-up of all successful politicians. A. J. B. agreed. By humbugging I don't mean deceiving. Perhaps humbugging is the wrong word.

R.: You mean the art of advertising—the power of attracting public attention. That is necessary for all who depend upon the suffrages of the people—politicians, singers, golf professionals, painters, musicians, tight-rope dancers, etc.. The individual must be able to do his job and do it well, but he must have the art of interesting the public and of making them believe that he can do his job.

B. L.: That is what I mean and that is what A. J. B. meant. You have it, George. You have an interesting personality; that is what makes you so successful a speaker.

L. G.: That was Mr. G.'s strong point as an orator—his personality, the secret of all good speaking.

Sir William Milligan, the doctor, is a nice clear-headed Scotsman. He told some good stories; one of an after-dinner speaker proposing the ladies. "Our arms your defence. Your arms our reward."

22ND (SUNDAY).—L. G. spoke much of the death of Sam Evans. He said, "Evans had a jealous disposition, but was

clever and made a good judge. In the House of Commons he was an excellent speaker and knew how to make the best of his goods. He often said smart things. Referring to Lecky, M.P., who used to sit up with an inquiring look on his face, Sam remarked, 'He looks like a note of interrogation.' Very smart that! "

Much talk with L. G. about the election. He is drawing up reasons pro and con. He asked me for my views. The point I made was the necessity for re-establishing the authority of Parliament in the country. He agreed, but said that Bonar Law and Balfour would be frightened by any definite reference to the labour situation and would consider labour unrest as a reason against an election. On the following day L. G. showed me his memorandum and one prepared by Guest. I had a long talk with L. G. on the labour question. He is anxious to improve conditions, but does not, I think, understand the worker's point of view. Just now he is angry about the strikes and keen on putting the strikers in the Army, as they stand in the way of the prosecution of the war.

24TH.—Winston Churchill came to lunch, apparently with no particular object. We were glad to see him. He was very amusing as usual. He said that if our military successes continued, peace would come upon us like a thief in the night.

27TH.—Lord Murray and Lord Rothermere appeared on the scene yesterday, with the proposal, so I gather from various sources, that there should be a coalition in which Asquith would become Lord Chancellor, and Runciman and, I think, Samuel, would enter the Government, together with half a dozen of the younger men all thirsting for office. I am told that Mrs. A. approves. What the P.M. thinks of this, I don't yet know. Rothermere arrived to-day with Northcliffe. Whether he approves I have not heard, as it was late when I arrived.

The L.C.J. arrived to-day. He was to have come to-morrow, but I understand L. G. asked him to come a day earlier. Whether the Chief knows of the proposal, I can't say, but he volunteered the information that Margot Asquith had invited him for dinner last night.

The publication of Haig's dispatches was discussed.

WILSON: Haig has agreed to cut out certain portions indicated by Milner.

L. G.: I don't think that will do. We can have no cuttings out. (Wilson looked rather glum at this.) If the dispatches are published we must publish our reply. We must show that we sent 1,200,000 men to France this year. We must also show that the Cabinet objected to Haig taking over so much of the line. He wants to throw the blame on other people. That I shall not allow. The difficulty is that if we publish the dispatch and the explanation, we may be giving information to the enemy.

L. G. spent the major part of the evening alone with Wilson, studying maps, etc.. Meanwhile Kerr and I talked with Reading of his work in America. He views with apprehension commercial conditions after the war. He thinks the Americans will strive to scoop up the world's trade. The war has strengthened the federal idea. America is becoming a great united nation, and as such will prove an even greater factor in the naval, military, and commercial life of the world. He thinks President Wilson a very wily, able man, and that he will take a great place in history. Reading believes that Wilson thought for some time that he could keep America out of the war. In this idea a very large section of American public men were in agreement with him. Gradually he came to see that America must fight, and in this view also he was followed by the section referred to.

After L. G. had gone to bed we had a long and interesting talk with Reading and Wilson about Russia.

WILSON: The Tsar said to me, "They say that I should adopt representative government. I know my people. They do not want representative government. It would not work. I shall govern as Tsar; that is what is best." Now, was the Tsar right or was he wrong?

Reading: I should say wrong.

R.: I should say right, but he should have appointed a proper executive. He was represented by rascals and incompetents.

WILSON: That is true!

READING: The trouble was that he could not ensure that his orders would be obeyed. Thomas, the Frenchman, told me



that, in commenting upon some action of the French in regard to labour, the Tsar said to him, "How can you do such a thing? I am supposed to be an autocrat, but I could not do it!" Thomas replied, "The reason is that I can get my orders obeyed, and you cannot!" Later the Tsar sent him a message saying, "What you said was true. I cannot get my orders carried out in the same way as you can in France."

(I think I noted this conversation at the time.)

KERR: And yet the Tsar was able to stop the sale of vodka. That does not tally with his statement as to lack of authority.

27TH AND 28TH.—Arthur Balfour, Bonar Law, and Reading. The two former did not arrive until 9 o'clock, having had a breakdown. Meanwhile L. G. was making notes as to the topics of discussion. Bonar Law is very broken and obviously on the verge of a breakdown. I had a touching interview with him.

R.: You have had a hard four years, but you have been very successful. You have led the House of Commons with marked success and you have the respect and esteem of everyone there.

BONAR LAW: They are all sorry for me. They know what I have suffered; they know what I am suffering.

R.: They know also that you are straight and honest, and they admire your clear, direct way of stating things.

B. L. (the tears coursing down his cheeks): It is useless to conceal that I am nearly at the end of my tether. I do my work from day to day because I have certain powers of endurance, but they are growing less and less. You can see the condition I am in. If it were not so, I should not give way like this. Ever since the death of my sons I have gradually been growing worse and worse.

L. G. and I talked of this later.

L. G.: I don't know what to do with him. He has no outside interests and he won't go for a holiday. He does not even care for golf or bridge. He just reads and works and smokes all day. I feel very sorry for poor old Bonar.

At lunch, before the arrival of A. J. B. and Bonar Law, we talked of the early days of the war.

L. G.: I must confess I never thought there would be a war. I never believed that anyone would be so mad as to precipitate 12,000,000 armed men into a conflict. But I knew that if the war occurred it would be a long war.

R.: I remember that the Sunday before war broke out you told me you thought nothing would happen.

L. G.: Yes, that was my firm opinion. I remember the night that Russia declared war. I was at the Russian Opera. The curtain went up and there stood all the company ranged upon the stage with Chaliapine in the middle. He struck up the Marseillaise, which he and the company sang over and over again. Then I knew that dreadful things had been let loose in the world.

After dinner, L. G., A. J. B., and Bonar Law retired for a conference, which lasted until 11.30, the subjects being, so I believe, the proposal for a General Election, and the Bulgarian peace proposals. I asked L. G. whether there was to be an election. His answer was not definite. In effect he said, "Yes, unless peace negotiations alter the position."

When Bonar Law and A. J. B. came from the room where the conference took place, this after L. G. had gone to bed, A. J. B. remarked, "The P.M. is certainly a very attractive creature." Bonar Law said, "When he is keen on anything, he sweeps you along with him and imagines you are in agreement with him, when probably you are not. You may have to show him later plainly that you are not!"

A. J. B.: When he is wrong, he is usually wrong in a more interesting way than other people.

B. L.: He will only see one side of a question when he has made up his mind.

R.: As a man of action, that is his strength. When he comes to a decision, he is like an engine that has determined to start. He begins to work up the steam. He compels himself to see no obstacles and to believe that anyone who disagrees with him is either a misguided fool or a knave. That is a great source of strength when you want to do things, but a dangerous quality if your decision happens to be wrong. Many people who come to decisions weaken themselves in action by constant questionings and doubts.

BALFOUR: Quite true!

On the morning of the 28th another conference took place. A. J. B. and B. L. returned to London at 12.30. L. G. told me later that he may have to go to France for a conference with the Bulgarians, to whom a safe conduct has been offered.

L. G.: I shall trust no one else. I must go myself. A. J. B. would not be quite the man for the task. It will require handling. The Serbians will be apt to think only of their side of the war. They will want to decimate the Bulgarians now that they have them in their power.

R.: That is only natural. So should I if I were a Serbian.

L. G.: Yes, quite right, so should I! But we must look at the war as a whole. I am disposed to try to get the Bulgarians out of the war.<sup>1</sup> We might be able to get them to attack the Turks. I should like to see that rotten old Empire broken up.

Much talk between L. G. and Reading on the same subject. Reading pointed out that America is not at war with Bulgaria, but may want a say in the peace negotiations. Bulgaria may, he thinks, ask for American intervention. Reading views the future of our relations with America with grave apprehension. He thinks that the American people are at the beginning of a new era. In the war serious points of difference are continually arising.

29TH.—Talked with L. G. and Reading regarding the crisis of March. L. G. bitterly complained of American delays in sending troops.

READING: They did not realise the necessity. They thought the Allies were well able to hold the line and we never told the Americans that we could carry their troops. Indeed, I heard Haig say at your house that we had plenty of troops and that he doubted if the Germans would make a big offensive. He anticipated only sporadic attacks. I went away very uneasy. I thought there was something wrong.

L. G.: That may be so. The War Office were undoubtedly responsible for a good deal of the delay.

READING: Who drafted the cablegram demanding more troops?

L. G.: I did that. I think on March 28th. I went for a

<sup>1</sup> Bulgaria capitulated on September 29th.

walk in the Park with Philip Kerr. Things looked very black. I determined to cable without reference to the Cabinet or Foreign Office. I went to the War Office and the cablegram was dispatched. I suppose Wilson has never forgiven me for sending the message which you [Reading] read at the public dinner in which I told the American public of the position.

READING: I don't think so. I don't think Wilson minded. He certainly said nothing to lead me to think so. I showed the message to House before I read it in public. It was an historic event. The telegram saved Europe.

Later I had a long talk with Reading about Anglo-American relations.

R.: Why does Wilson always refrain from mentioning the British effort in the war in his speeches? It looks ungenerous. It looks as if he wanted to adopt a high-handed, imperious attitude later on.

READING: The position is very dangerous and difficult. Wilson sits aloft and apart, and he directs and feeds the Press with his views and opinions. One great danger is that we may come to cross-purposes with the Americans, and in particular that L. G. and Wilson may come to cross-purposes. I think that much might be done by removing minor causes of disagreement, such as the differences regarding the cost of transport of American troops and the alleged profit on the wool.

A very cheerful day, notwithstanding the horrible weather. News of advance in the West arriving all day. The P.M. full of glee. On the arrival of the message he began to dance a hornpipe.

The Bulgar delegates have arrived at Salonika, where Venizelos has gone to meet them.

L. G.: I am glad that Venizelos will be there. He is a wise man, but I expect he will want to impose very hard terms. That would not be my idea. I want to get the Bulgars out of the war. German troops are on their way to reinforce the Bulgarians.

30TH.—Robertson Nicoll came down to lunch. Much talk about books and politics. Nicoll evidently surprised at L. G.'s knowledge of the former, and at his intimate acquaintance with the war of 1745. Later came Baker, American War Minister—

a nice, trim, little man of the Y.M.C.A. type—shrewd and clear. Also Reading returned. He told us that when he took L. G.'s telegram to President Wilson on March 27th, or 28th, the President said as he left him, "Tell him [L. G.] that we will do our damndest." Reading said that first of all he intended to wire this to L. G., but on reflection thought it wiser to refrain. Baker listened with his mouth open and remarked, "Wilson don't often swear, but when he does he means it!" at which we all laughed heartily. Later on came Milner, Henry Wilson, Radcliffe, the Director of Military Operations, and Sir Joseph Maclay. After dinner a long conference was held which lasted till a late hour. The charge for carrying the American troops was, I believe, the chief question for discussion. We charge £25 per head, but on the other hand the Americans charge us at the same rate when their ships are used by us. I did not hear what decision was reached.

The party started home at an early hour in the morning, Wilson at 7.30 and Maclay at 8.

## Chapter XLI

*The Daily Chronicle purchase—Conscription for Ireland—President Wilson's dangerous line—L. G. on the Fourteen Points—Difficulties with Pershing's "Unconditional Surrender."*

OCTOBER 1ST, 1918.—The *Daily Chronicle* purchase has been completed. L. G. is to have full control of the editorial policy through Sir H. Dalziel, who will in effect be his agent. The experiment will be interesting.

In the evening, French, Henry Wilson, Rosslyn Wemyss,<sup>1</sup> and Hankey arrived for the night. Much talk of Irish conscription. French all for it. And of course Wilson. L. G. more judicial, but with obvious leanings in favour of enforcing the act. After dinner an important conference at which I was not present.

2ND.—Drove to London with Wemyss and Hankey. Wemyss is a most liberal-minded man. He says that both officers and men in the Navy are badly paid and that their pay should be increased. It is, however, difficult to persuade the Treasury to move. He gave an account of his experiences when war broke out. On the Thursday (I think it was) prior to August 4th, the Admiralty telegraphed to him, he then being in Germany taking a cure, that there was no need for him to return. But later came a wire calling him back. Before the arrival of the second telegram an English visitor at the hotel came to him and said, "You are my barometer. So long as you are here, I feel there is no need for me to move. But would you mind telling me specifically what news you have?" Wemyss showed him the first wire, which of course reassured him. When the second wire arrived, Wemyss could not find the man, who is probably still in Germany.

3RD.—Received letter from Northcliffe, who was at Danny yesterday seeing Lloyd George, saying he was sorry I

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Wester-Wemyss; First Sea Lord, 1917-19; Member of War Cabinet, 1918.

was away so that he did not see me also. He went on to say that the Old Gang are trying to lay hold of the legs of the Prime Minister and drag him down, and he thinks they will drag him down unless he realises his position. He says further that because L. G. often comes face to face with the little people in the Government he seems to think they have some standing in the country. Northcliffe says he would be very glad to help L. G., but that he declines to work for the return of the Old Gang. He thinks Asquith might be made Lord Chancellor, although he is bound to confess that the few people to whom he has made the suggestion seemed outraged by the idea. He says his position may be summed up as follows: He does not propose to use his newspapers and personal influence to support a new Government, elected at the most critical period of the history of the British nations, unless he knows definitely and in writing, and can approve, the personal constitution of that Government.

I showed the letter to L. G., who said that he could give no undertaking as to the constitution of the Government and would not dream of doing such a thing. I communicated this to N., who said very little.

10TH.—L. G. back from Paris—quite fresh after a twelve-hour journey. Sat up talking until nearly 11. In high spirits at the Allied victories. He said he complimented Foch, who replied, "It is all due to you. I am your invention." L. G. answered, "And the best invention of the war."

L. G. told me that Wilson had replied to the German Peace Note without consultation with the Allies or the military commanders. Foch says that an armistice would be fatal, as it would enable the Germans to shorten their line without loss, which is just what they want to do.

R.: Wilson seems to be a very conceited person.

L. G.: Yes. Clemenceau calls him Jupiter. Wilson is adopting a dangerous line. He wants to pose as the great arbiter of the war. His Fourteen Points<sup>1</sup> are very dangerous. He speaks of the freedom of the seas. That would involve the

<sup>1</sup> President Wilson's celebrated "fourteen points," which he considered should form the basis of peace with Germany, were laid down in a speech to Congress on January 8th, 1918.

abolition of the right of search and seizure, and the blockade. We shall not agree to that; such a change would not suit this country. Wilson does not see that by laying down terms without consulting the Allies, he is making their position very difficult. He had no right to reply to the German Note without consultation, and I insisted upon a cablegram being sent to him. The position is very disturbing.

R.: Your message to the troops has caused some comment owing to the statement that you had heard the news of the battle from Foch.

L. G.: That was quite an accident. Foch came rushing in with the news, and I said quite naturally and truly that I had heard it from Foch.

I TH.—We drove to Brighton and along the coast. L. G. in high spirits.

R.: Your sense of humour has kept you going through all these trying times.

L. G.: Well, I don't think I have ever been very gloomy. I always look on the bright side of things.

R.: But never very elated and never very cast down.

L. G.: It is always necessary to preserve a sense of proportion; that is one of the chief requisites of life.

R.: If you can find the time, you ought to make a speech regarding the wonderful doings of our soldiers. It would give great satisfaction, and no one could do it as you could.

L. G.: What I said about the aviators has taken the people's fancy. "Cavaliers of the clouds."

R.: It was a wonderful phrase. By the way, Robertson Nicoll says that you, Kerr, should go into public life, and that you would certainly do well.

L. G.: Of course he would. [Kerr is a man of outstanding ability, but very modest. He is very useful to the P.M. and it is a pleasure to work with him. He comes of one of the oldest families, but has no "side," and is a most unselfish person.] I often think of my early days in politics. I remember that they came to me and asked me to be more gentle with Mr. Gladstone. My answer was to quote a saying of Oliver Cromwell: "If I were in a battle I should shoot the King if I met him on the other side." Those old Covenanters had some fine sayings.



R.: Do you remember the Earl of Essex's dreadful saying, "Stone dead hath no fellow" ?

L. G.: That is a dreadful saying.

KERR (to L. G.): Did you read Riddell your poem?

L. G.: No. I found it in an anthology of Welsh verses published during the past twenty-five years. I wrote it concerning D. A. Thomas<sup>1</sup> when I was fighting him more than twenty years ago. Kerr asked me to explain it (the poem is in Welsh). You can't explain poetry. When I said that the poem described the splitting of a cloud or something of that sort, he objected that you cannot split clouds. After that I gave up the attempt.

Later L. G., Kerr, and I drove to London. We talked of men's deficiencies.

L. G.: "The one thing needful." What a great saying that was! What a sermon could be preached upon it. How many men we know have all qualities but the one. And then what a great saying that was, "He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone!" I often think of it.

R.: And the parable of the young man who preferred his cash to the Kingdom of Heaven. The divided ideal is always destructive.

L. G.: Yes, the young man was evidently a prig, and the Lord marked him down at once. His saying, "Render under Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" was another sagacious utterance. He saw the necessity for supporting the Government. (There is nothing like leather, even for Prime Ministers.—R.)

12TH.—A momentous day. Lunched with Mr. and Mrs. L. G. at Walton and then on to Danny. L. G. not very well. Pains in his left leg, which he says always seize him if he is very run down. Talked of the peace negotiations.

Later Lord Reading arrived for the night. More talk about peace.

L. G.: It is important that you, Reading, should get back to America to look after our interests there. I have been picturing to myself my first interview with President Wilson.

<sup>1</sup> Later Lord Rhondda.

READING: Clemenceau says that after a few hours, only feathers would be left to tell the tale. Both would have disappeared!

L. G. (laughing): I should like Clemenceau to see him first with me behind the curtain. That would be an amusing interview. However, he has placed his allies in a very difficult position. Eric Geddes has cabled inquiring whether I wish him to say anything special in a speech that he is making on Monday. I cabled asking him to refrain from approving or criticising Wilson's note and suggesting that he should refer to the achievements of the British Army. I am not quite sure that it would not be a good thing for Clemenceau or me to make a speech indicating the position in an inoffensive way. The American public would soon understand and would speedily make it clear to Wilson that he must act in accord with the French and British, who have borne the burden of the day. Before you [Reading] go, you must get the facts about Pershing. It is a pity you cannot get them from the French. Pershing is most difficult. Before the recent operations, Weygand, Foch's Chief of Staff, went to him to give him advice. He refused to take it and there was, of course, a scene. Everything happened as Weygand predicted, with the result that the American Army has been quite ineffective. They have hindered Foch's plans. One side of the claw of the crab has not been working. The American Staff had not got the experience. For example, they used the same roads for incoming and outgoing traffic, with the result that there was serious, very serious congestion. They could get neither back nor forward; and had the Germans been fighting with their former spirit, the Americans would have suffered very severely. Pershing says that America did not enter the war with the same objects as France and Great Britain, but for independent objects, and therefore wants an independent army. Had the brigading system been carried out we should have defeated the Germans before this. But it is most important that Pershing should act under Foch's instructions and take advice from those who know more about the job than he can possibly do. Wilson should know these facts, which are being withheld from him.

READING: I agree. Pershing spoke to me in the same way. He was full of that sort of thing.

Reading reminded L. G. of the financial arrangements made when L. G. was Chancellor.

L. G.: The old governor, Cunliffe, is a good old fellow—very inarticulate, but he has good judgment. At my first conference with the French and Russian Ministers of Finance I asked him to explain our views about gold. He gave three grunts, and that was all the explanation. The people at the Treasury were horrified at my proposals. I remember one night when the officials were nearly hysterical. What has happened? We have got back all the loan except £10,000,000, which we shall recover after the war.

Later L. G. sat reading Foreign Office papers, occasionally reading extracts aloud and making comments. For example: "The Germans are in a serious condition internally. Revolution is imminent if no peace is possible. They have no raw materials. The Kaiser is about to abdicate in favour of his second son."

L. G.: That's the British Navy. President Wilson can't claim that!

After L. G. had gone to bed, the German reply to President Wilson's Note came over the telephone from Downing Street. It was written down and taken to L. G. by Kerr, who soon returned saying, "There is awful trouble upstairs, I can tell you! He thinks that the Allies are now in a horrible mess. Wilson has promised them an armistice."

R.: His Note does not say that. It says, "I will not propose a cessation of hostilities while German armies are on the soil of the Allies."

READING: The next sentence, however, refers to the good faith of the discussion depending upon the consent of the Central Powers to evacuate. Does not that mean an armistice to enable them to do so?

R.: Wilson may well say, Get out as best you can, and when you are out I will make proposals.

KERR: He can't mean that.

R.: Most people read the Note in the sense I indicated.

READING: It is badly drafted.

In the course of the evening L. G. expressed a desire to see American newspapers of various types and gave instructions for them to be ordered. Reading suggested cabled extracts as alternatives.

L. G.: You must see the newspapers themselves. Extracts are often misleading, and the extract often depends on the extractor, who selects what suits him for the purpose he has in view.

13TH.—Much talk with L. G. and Reading regarding Wilson's first Peace Note. We walked to the top of Wolstenbury Hill, L. G. declaiming all the time against Wilson's action in replying without consultation with the Allies, and also in regard to the terms of the Note.

L. G. : The Germans have accepted the terms, as I prophesied they would. We are in a serious difficulty. Wilson has put us in the cart and he will have to get us out.

R.: The Note says that Wilson will not recommend a cessation of hostilities while the Germans are in possession of Allied territory. It is true that the next sentence says that the goodwill of any conversations must depend upon their consent to evacuate, but it is quite open to Wilson to say that there can be no armistice while the Germans remain in possession.

L. G. would not agree upon this construction, and said that if any lawyer had written such a letter he would be regarded as guilty of sharp practice if he afterwards claimed that he had predicated for evacuation as a condition precedent.

Reading did not agree with my construction, but strongly rebutted L. G.'s contention that Wilson had placed himself in a difficult position.

L. G.: The time is coming when we shall have to speak out. We have borne the heat and burden of the day and we are entitled to be consulted. What do the Fourteen Points mean? They are very nebulous.

To lunch came A. J. Balfour, Bonar Law, Milner, Winston Churchill, and Henry Wilson; later came Rosslyn Wemyss and Hankey. After lunch a big conference at which I was not present. A. J. Balfour, Hankey, and Philip Kerr then set to work to write memoranda expressing the decisions arrived at, each in a separate room. Meanwhile L. G. and the rest of the

party adjourned to the gardens. From subsequent conversation I gathered that the terms of the armistice had been under discussion and that the conference had decided upon demanding unconditional surrender.

L. G.: I think it might have been wiser to have prescribed for Foch's terms (bridge-heads on the Rhine, etc.). They are not so humiliating, and I think the Germans would be more likely to accept them.

Before the party broke up it was decided that Sutherland should see the newspapers and explain the position. I told Milner that I had provided Sutherland with a list. The party left in a cloud of motor-cars, Harry Wilson driving his, which had been built for the Tsar of Russia, and the speedometer of which is marked for versts instead of miles. After dinner, this being our last day at Danny, L. G. proposed my health in a delightful little speech. I understand that the Conference decided to make representations to Wilson as to his Note and reply to the Germans, but am not sure about this.

. . . TH.—Golfed with L. G. and Philip Kerr, just a few holes in the twilight. Then to dinner with L. G.. He said, "We have not much to eat, but what there is we will share with you." Much fun in dividing up the dinner, which turned out to be ample.

L. G.: What answer do you think the Germans will make to Wilson's reply to their Note?

R.: They will want to know what terms the naval and military advisers of the Allies wish to impose, and will express their determination to vacate France and Belgium as soon as possible.

L. G.: And will no doubt disclaim the outrages referred to by Wilson. They are probably waiting before replying to ascertain what the majority of the German people are prepared to do, i.e. whether they can be depended upon to fight to the death in case of need.

When I arrived for dinner I found L. G. seated by the fire reading *Tancred*, by Disraeli.

L. G.: I have got *Tancred* because of Palestine. It is a wonderful book. I could not stand *Lothair*, but this is good. *Lothair* was written at a time when Dizzy dared not say what

he thought. In his early books he could. Just listen to this (reading the Bishop's homily). Is not that fine? You could find nothing of Gladstone's to equal it, so shrewd and true and so well expressed.

R.: It sounds quite modern, although written nearly eighty years ago. How the words stand up on the page like facets!

L. G.: He had a wonderful style.

R.: I hear that Lord Rosebery is studying the life of Christ.

L. G.: I hope he will write on the subject; that would be very interesting. He will go down to history as a greater writer than he was a Prime Minister. By the way, the Princess Murat said to me when in Paris that the French are a cleverer nation than the English, but produce fewer great men. What do you think of that?

R.: It is not true. As to great men, how about Napoleon, Descartes, Cuvier, Pasteur, Rousseau, Voltaire, Victor Hugo, and last, but not least, Foch?

L. G.: I think she was wrong, but you must not claim Napoleon as a Frenchman. He was Italian.

Then the Foreign Office bag arrived and L. G. read the contents, reading extracts aloud with comments.

The P.M. has some phrases that he is always using, "Well here" or "Well now" are two of them. Henry Wilson, referring to L. G.'s desire for immediate action, has a story, of course imaginary, that one day L. G. said, "Well here. Let us do it *yesterday!*"

15TH.—Guest, the Whip, asked me to call upon him at the House of Commons. After a long discussion about the *Daily Chronicle*, he talked about politics. The effect of what he said was:

1. That it would be well to take Asquith into the Government.

2. That this would unite the Liberal Party.

3. That L. G.'s position would thus be strengthened with the Tories, seventy or eighty of whom would follow him in any case.

4. That he (Guest) saw little of L. G., and was not in his

confidence to any great extent and did not know what he meant to do.

5. That violent intrigues are on foot with a view to all sorts of political combinations.

19TH.—L. G. came to tea with me. He, Philip Kerr, and I again played a few holes in the twilight. More talk about the German answer not yet issued. Haig is here for consultation. L. G. thinks he looks worn and is anxious for peace. It seems that he advised L. G. to make peace some time ago. Haig thinks there is a lot of fight still left in the Germans.

L. G.: If the Commander-in-Chief is tired out, what must the Army be? If I were the Germans I should want to know whether the Allies are prepared to accept Wilson's Fourteen Points. Of course we are not. We cannot accept No. 2—freedom of the seas. And there are other questions that will require very careful consideration. It is most unfortunate that Wilson did not consult the French and ourselves before formulating his terms.

20TH.—A very pleasant evening at L. G.'s. Present, Mr. and Mrs. L. G., Sir Bertrand Dawson, and Philip Kerr. Sir Bertrand Dawson<sup>1</sup> had examined L. G.. He says he is nearly normal and that his arteries are good. L. G. much relieved and reassured. Much talk of King Edward. L. G. says that Bethmann-Hollweg told him that King Edward had surrounded Germany with a belt of steel. This after B.-H.'s fifth lager.

R.: Dawson is a handsome, able man.

L. G.: Phrenologically his head shows what yours [Riddell's] does—a great knowledge of human nature.

I disclaimed this quality.

L. G.: Yes, you have it highly developed.

R.: I wonder!

When Dawson had gone we talked of the March crisis.

L. G.: It was a terrible time, but I never thought they would defeat us. I thought we might have to take our men out of France, and I should have made arrangements. But we should have carried on the war.

R.: So long as we held command of the seas.

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord Dawson of Penn.

L. G.: What Wilson wishes to take away from us now!

L. G. thinks the Germans will fight hard when they see the armistice terms and that they are shortening their line preparatory to doing so. Provided of course that the high command can secure the support of the people.

25TH.—The First Lord asked me to call. He is just back from America. He says that the President was much surprised to learn what the British Navy had done, and how little had been done by the American Navy. He showed me the figures. The American contribution has been practically nothing, whereas we have had to take off our destroyers and other craft from submarine chasing in order to guard the American troopships. Notwithstanding all the promises which have been held out, the Americans have produced very few new war craft—the amount quite negligible; but arrangements have now been made which Geddes thinks will ensure increased production, although on a much smaller scale than was originally proposed. On the other hand, our naval shipping construction has been amazing. Geddes showed me the figures. He thinks the Germans have been holding up their submarine campaign during the past month, owing to the peace negotiations. He showed me the figures regarding the German submarines. They started with twenty-eight when the war commenced and they got up to a hundred and sixty. We reduced the number to a hundred and forty-five. Now the Germans have got a hundred and eighty-one, which is the highest figure they have reached during the war. Geddes does not view the prospect with alarm, but thinks that if the Germans begin the campaign again in earnest we may have serious times. He is anxious that the newspapers should comment upon the part taken by the Navy in the war, so that our people, the Americans, our Allies, and the enemy may understand what we have done.

27TH.—L. G. telephoned asking me to lunch at Downing Street. "Be punctual," he said—"1 o'clock sharp, so that we may go to Walton Heath and play golf." Notwithstanding this injunction he did not arrive until after 2 o'clock. Reading to lunch also. They had both been at the Cabinet. R. very complimentary to L. G. about what had happened at the Cabinet. What the subject was I did not ask and was not told.



Addressing L. G., Reading said in his rich, musical voice, "You never did anything better in your life. I have seen you on many difficult occasions, but I have never seen you to such advantage as to-day. You out-did yourself. It was a wonderful performance."

L. G. was obviously pleased. He replied, "Well, it was a difficult job. They little knew how difficult it was. I have rarely had one more difficult."

L. G.: Harington said some very good things to-day. He said the French are leaning up against each other, they are so tired and weary, and the Americans are tripping over their own feet—two good phrases, and very true.

On the road to Walton Heath, L. G. asked me what I thought were the chances of peace. I said, "A slight shade of odds in favour of an armistice before Christmas."

L. G.: That is my opinion.

R.: I suppose that our policy is to get the Central Powers out of the war one by one. Turkey will go next, I assume, and then Austria?

L. G.: Yes; when Germany finds herself isolated, she will begin to think with a vengeance.

R.: And then for the Fourteen Points!

L. G. (laughing): Clemenceau says that the Almighty was content with ten, but that ten are not enough for President Wilson, who wants to surpass all records.

30TH.—Sir Robert Horne, Controller of the Admiralty, dined with me. He says that Eric Geddes is uncertain what to do after the war<sup>1</sup>. He does not like politics, but does not look forward to going back to railway work. Some of his Directors on the North-Eastern Railway, of which he was formerly manager, are now his subordinates.

I told Horne, who rejoices in humorous stories and sharp sayings, one of Labouchere's biting remarks. Allan, a Northern M.P., had an enormous long beard. Labby remarked, "Never again will I sit next to Allan on a wet day. His beard smells like a damp rug!"

There has been much discussion about an advertising cam-

<sup>1</sup> Sir Eric Geddes is now Chairman of the Dunlop Rubber Company and Imperial Airways Limited.

**October 1918]**

**LORD RIDDELL'S WAR DIARY**

paign by the Election Committee, consisting of Freddie Guest, Henry Norman, George Younger,<sup>1</sup> and Sir William Bull.<sup>2</sup> I told Guest I thought the advertisements ill-advised and that they would create a wrong impression. Northcliffe rang me up and spoke in strong terms about the scheme. He asked me to use my influence to get it stopped. I wrote to L. G. objecting to it. Ultimately the advertisements to which objection was taken were withdrawn.

<sup>1</sup> Later Viscount Younger ; Chief Agent Conservative Party ; d. 1929.

<sup>2</sup> Chairman, London Unionist M.P.s, 1910-29 ; d. 1931.

## Chapter XLII

*The Police Pensions Bill—A just amendment—Bonar Law's advice to L. G.—“Retire Now”—Peace at last—Sidelights on Versailles.*

NOVEMBER 5TH, 1918.—L. G. just back from Paris. Telephoned asking me to call at Downing Street. I asked him how he was. He said he had had a terrible journey—sea very rough. He motored to London during the night. He said he had had a most successful conference. He said, “We have detached Germany's allies one by one, and now she is alone, and we have sent her some hot pepper in the shape of our armistice terms.”

6TH.—I am told that the Police are very dissatisfied with the Pensions Bill introduced by the Home Secretary. They say it does not fulfil the undertakings given by the Prime Minister.

7TH.—Saw Home Secretary<sup>1</sup> and explained position. He expressed great surprise. I said that the Bill is permissive only. The pension may be granted by the Police Authority. The men say that widows are entitled to the pension as a right. The Home Secretary agreed, and said this could be altered by an amendment of a few words. I said, “No doubt, but the point is that the Bill has been wrongly drawn and that the men do not know that you are willing to amend it.”

8TH.—Spoke to Harris, Cave's secretary, and urged him to make a public statement as to the amendments in order to satisfy the Police.

9TH.—Lord Mayor's Banquet at Guildhall. Took my wife. A remarkable gathering. L. G.'s and Balfour's speeches worthy of the great occasion. L. G. in great form, smiling and winking at me all the time when anything amusing happened. As we waited for the motors he said, “A terrible tragedy nearly took place this evening. Look at my uniform. I have outgrown it. I have not had it on for nearly five years. The

<sup>1</sup> Sir George (later Viscount) Cave.

collar is an inch too narrow! " "I saw that," I said, "and so did everybody else!"

L. G. (laughing): But there was a greater danger down below. The breeches nearly gave way! What a catastrophe it would have been!

10TH.—Drove with L. G., Mrs. L. G., Megan, and Miss Roberts to Walton Heath at 11.15. Before we started L. G. busy with Bonar Law.

L. G.: Bonar Law said to me, "Do you want to go down to history as the greatest of all Englishmen?" I replied, "Well, I don't know that I do, as I shan't be here at the time. But tell me your prescription! Do you mean retire into private life now that the war has been won?" Bonar said, "Yes!" He is right. I might take to farming, and make just an occasional appearance on great occasions when I had something important to say.

By the way, did I tell you that when Foch showed our terms to the German envoys they were nearly dumb with astonishment at their severity? The Versailles Conference was a great strain. I had to run it. I was chiefly responsible for the Austrian terms. When they were read to Clemenceau the old boy remarked, "There is only one thing omitted. You have not demanded the Emperor's breeches!" Clemenceau is a splendid old man—a wonderful old man. But very pugnacious. I am pugnacious, but not so much so as he is. I had to have a row with him—not a personal row—we have never had that—I mean a row concerning policy. The French wanted to make the Turkish peace alone as they had made peace with Bulgaria. I declined. I said, "Great Britain is not, and shall not be if I can help it, a vassal State. The British have done most of the fighting with the Turks. We have great interests in the East. We are therefore entitled to, and must insist upon, a joint negotiation." The French are rather greedy; they want everything. However, I got my way, but only now I have had to telegraph to General Milne declining to agree to the French garrisoning the Bosphorus and ourselves the Dardanelles. The garrisons were to be mixed. The French have endeavoured to construe this into an arrangement that would give them control of Constantinople. In my wire I said I was sure there was

some mistake, and that as time pressed I had telegraphed direct to Milne.

We had a lot of trouble with the Americans regarding the freedom of the seas. The Americans threatened to make a separate peace. I said, "We shall fight on, even if we have to go on alone."

Clemenceau said, slapping his chest, "Yes, and we shall fight with you!" The elections show that America is not behind Wilson. He does not properly appreciate our share in the war. I am feeling to-day like a man who has been in a big thing that is over. He is at a loose end; he does not know what to do. I feel like that. I have had a terrible time during the past four and a half years. We shall announce the election next week. Old Clemenceau said a great thing to me about social upheavals. "Victory," said he, "is a great safeguard. Defeat stirs up internal strife."

11TH.—Armistice signed. Peace at last!

13TH.—The newspapers appointed me to represent the Press at the Peace Conference. Lord Burnham, who presided, said some nice things which were well received. He referred to what I had done for the Press during the war, and said that I was the best person to go to Paris. At the request of the Conference, he wrote a letter to the Prime Minister sending the resolution, and strongly supporting my nomination.

The Prime Minister said he was gratified I was going. Mr. Balfour also said he thought I was the best person to go, and that he was glad the newspapers had asked me to do so. Northcliffe told me he would do everything in his power to help me. He rang up quite voluntarily. He, Marlowe,<sup>1</sup> Caird,<sup>2</sup> and Campbell Stuart<sup>3</sup> have been most kind in every way.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Marlowe, editor *Daily Mail*, 1899–1926.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Andrew Caird, managing director *Daily Mail*, 1922–6.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Campbell Stuart, managing director of The Times Publishing Company, 1919–24.

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